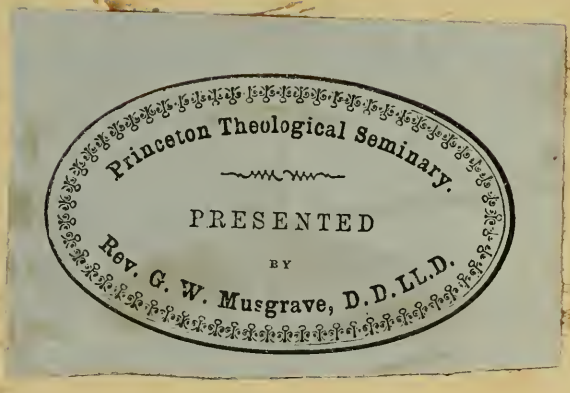

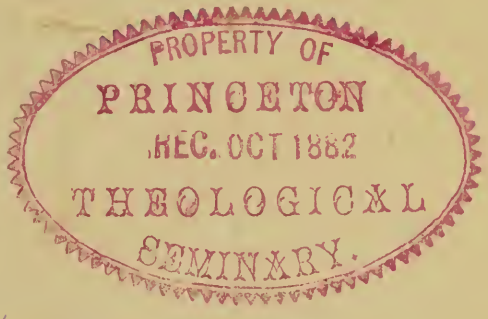

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The whole works of John
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THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT DARTMOUTH, DEVON.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE WHOLE.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

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PRINCETON
REC. OCT 1892
THEOLOGICAL

HUSBANDRY

SPIRITUALIZED:

OR,

THE HEAVENLY USE OF EARTHLY THINGS.

Consisting of many pleasant *observations*, pertinent *applications*, and serious *reflections;* and each chapter concluded with a *divine* and suitable *poem*. Directing *husbandmen* to the most excellent improvements of their common employments. Whereunto are added, by way of *Appendix*, several choice *occasional meditations*, upon *birds*, *beasts*, *trees*, *flowers*, *rivers*, and several other objects; fitted for the help of such as desire to walk with God in all their solitudes, and recesses from the world.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Worshipful Robert Savery, and William Savery, of *Slade*, Esquires.

Honoured Friends,

IT hath been long since observed, that the world below is a glass to discover the world above; *Seculum est speculum:* and although I am not of their opinion, that say, the Heathens may spell Christ out of the sun, moon, and stars; yet this I know, that the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures, have a language; and though not by articulate speech, yet in a metaphorical sense, they preach unto man the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, Rom. i. 20. "There is (saith the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 3.) no speech, nor language, "where their voice is not heard." Or (as Junius renders it) there is no speech, nor words, yet without these, their voice is understood, and their line (i. e. saith Diodate) their writing in gross and plain draughts, is gone out through all the earth.

As man is compounded of a fleshly and spiritual substance, so God hath endowed the creatures with a spiritual, as well as fleshly usefulness, they have not only a natural use in alimental and physical respects, but also a spiritual use, as they bear the figures and similitudes of many sublime and heavenly mysteries. Believe me (saith contemplative Bernard) thou shalt find more in the woods, than in a corner; stones and trees will teach thee what thou shalt not hear from learned doctors. By a skilful and industrious improvement of the crea-

tures (saith Mr. Baxter excellently) we might have a fuller taste of Christ and heaven, in every bit of bread that we eat, and in every draught of beer that we drink, than most men have in the use of the sacrament.

And as the creatures teach divine and excellent things, so they teach them in a perspicuous and taking manner: *Duo illa nos maxime movent, similitudo et exemplum*, saith the orator *. These two things, similitude, and example, do especially move us. Notions are more easily conveyed to the understanding, by being first clothed in some apt similitude, and so represented to the sense. And therefore Jesus Christ the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by parables: and the prophets were much in this way also, Hos. xii. 10. "I "have used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets." Those that can retain little of a sermon, yet ordinarily retain an apt similitude.

I confess it is an humbling consideration, That man, who at first was led by the knowledge of God to the knowledge of the creature, must now by the creatures learn to know God. That the creatures, (as one saith) like Balaam's ass, should teach their master. But though this be the unhappiness of poor man in his collapsed state, yet it is now his wisdom to improve such helps: and whilst others, by the abuse of the creatures, are furthering their perdition, to be, by the spiritual improvement of them, promoting his own salvation.

It is an excellent art to discourse with birds, beasts, and fishes, about sublime and spiritual subjects, and make them answer to your questions; and this may be done, Job xii. 7, 8. "Ask now the "beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and "they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, "and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." That is (saith neat and accurate † Caryl) the creatures teach us when we think of them: 'They teach us, though not formally, yet virtually; they an-'swer and resolve the question put to them, though not explicitly 'to the ear, yet convincingly to the conscience. So then, we ask 'the creatures, when we diligently consider them, when we search 'out the perfections and virtues that God hath put into, or stampt 'upon them. To set our mind thus upon the creature, is to discourse 'with the creature; the questions which man asks of a beast, are 'only his own meditations. Again, the creatures teach us, when 'we in meditation make our collections and draw down a demon-'stration of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in making 'them, or the frailty of man in needing them: such conclusions and 'inferences are the teachings of the creatures.'

Common objects (saith ‡ another) may be improved two ways; viz. In an argumentative, and in a representative way; by reasoning from them, and by viewing the resemblance that is betwixt them and spiritual matters.

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* Cicero. † Caryl. in loc. ‡ Dr. Manton.

First, In meditation argue thus, as in the present case and similitude of the apostle. If an husbandman upon the ordinary principles of reason can wait for the harvest, shall not I wait for the coming of the Lord, the day of refreshing? the corn is precious to him, and so is the coming of Christ to me. Shall he be so patient, and endure so much for a little corn? and shall not I for the kingdom of heaven! He is willing to stay till all causes have had their operations, till he hath received the former and the latter rain; and shall not I, till the Divine decrees be accomplished.

Secondly, In meditation, make the resemblance, and discourse thus within yourselves: This is my seed-time, heaven is my harvest; here I must labour and toil and there rest. I see the husbandman's life is a great toil: no excellent thing can be obtained without labour, and an obstinate patience. I see the seed must be hidden in the furrows, rotten and corrupted, ere it can spring forth with any increase. Our hopes are hidden, light is sown for the righteous; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after all this there must be long waiting, we cannot sow and reap in a day; effects cannot follow till all necessary causes have first wrought. It is not in the power of husbandmen to ripen fruits at pleasure, our times are in the hands of God, therefore it is good to wait; a long-suffering patience will reap the desired fruit. Thus you have some hints of this heavenly art of improving the creatures.

The motives inducing me to this undertaking, were the Lord's owning with some success, my labours of a like nature *, together with the desire and inclination (stirred up in me, I hope by the Spirit of the Lord) to devote my vacant hours to his service in this kind. I considered, that if the Pharisees, in a blind zeal to a faction, could compass sea and land, to proselyte men to their party, though thereby they made them sevenfold more the children of the devil than before; how much more was I obliged, by true love to God, and zeal to the everlasting happiness of souls, to use my utmost endeavours both with *seamen* and *husbandmen*, to win them to Christ, and thereby make them more than seventy-seven fold happier than before? Not to mention other encouragements to this work, which I received from the earnest desires of some reverend and worthy brethren inviting thereunto; all which I hope the event will manifest to be a call from God to this work.

I confess I met with some discouragement in my first attempt, from my unacquaintedness with rural affairs; and because I was to travel in a path (to me) untrodden; but having once engaged in it, those discouragements were soon overcome: and being now brought to what you here see, I offer to your hands these first fruits of my spare hours.

I presume you will account it no disparagement that I dedicate a

* Navigation Spiritualized.

book of husbandry to gentlemen of your quality. This is *spiritual husbandry*, which here is taught you; and yet I tell you, that great persons have accounted that civil employment (which is much inferior to this) no disparagement to them. "The king himself is served "by the field," Eccles. v. 9. Or, as Montanus renders the Hebrew text, *Rex agro fit servus;* The king himself is a servant to the field. And of king Uzziah it is written, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. "That he "loved husbandry." And Amos vii. 1. we read of the king's *mowings.* Yea, Pliny hath observed, that corn was never so plentiful at Rome, as when the same men tilled the land that ruled the *commonwealth. Quasi gauderet terra laureato vomere, scilicet et aratore triumphali;* as though the earth itself rejoiced in the laurelled plowshare, and the triumphant plowman.

What pleasure you will find in reading it I know not; but to me it hath been a pleasant path from first to last; who yet have been at far greater expence of time and pains in compiling it, than you can be in reading it. The husbandman's work, you know, is no easy work, and the spiritualizing of it hath greater difficulties attending it; but yet the pleasure hath abundantly recompensed the pains. I have found Erasmus's observation experimentally true; *Qui literis addicti sumas, animi lassitudinem a studiis gravioribus contractam; ab iisdem studiis, sed amœnioribus recreamus:* Those that are addicted to study, (saith he) when they have wearied their spirits with study, can recreate them again with study, by making a diversion from that which is severe and knotty, to some more facile and pleasant subject.

But to hear that God hath used and honoured these papers to the good of any soul, will yield me the highest content and satisfaction imaginable.

May you but learn that lesson which is the general scope and design of this book, *viz.* How to walk with God from day to day, and make the several objects you behold, *scalæ et alæ*, wings and ladders to mount your souls nearer to him, who is the centre of all blessed spirits. How much will it comfort me, and confirm my hope, that it was the call of God indeed, which put me upon these endeavours!

O Sirs! What an excellent thing would it be for you, to make such holy improvements of all these earthly objects which daily occur to your senses, and cause them to proclaim and preach to you divine and heavenly mysteries; whilst others make them groan, by abusing them to sin, and subjecting them to their lusts. A man may be cast into such a condition, wherein he cannot enjoy the blessing and benefit of a pious and powerful ministry; but you cannot (ordinarily) fall into such a condition, wherein any thing (excepting a bad heart) can deprive you of the benefits and comforts of those excellent sermons, and divinity lectures, which the creatures here offer to preach and read to you.

Content not yourselves, I beseech you, with that natural sweetness the creatures afford; for thereof the beasts are capable, as much, if

not more, than you; but use them to those spiritual ends you are here directed, and they will yield you a sweetness far transcending that natural sweetness you ever relished in them; and indeed, you never use the creatures as their *Lord's*, till you come to see *your Lord* in and by them. I confess the discoveries of God in the word are far more excellent, clear, and powerful; "He hath mag-"nified his word above all his name." And therein are the unsearchable *riches of Christ*, or rich discoveries of that grace that hath no footsteps in nature, as the apostle's expression signifies, Eph. iii. 8.

And if that which might be known of God by the creatures, leave men without excuse, as it is manifest, Rom. i. 20. how inexcusable then will those be, who have received not only the teachings of the creature, but also the grace of the gospel in vain! "How "shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" They that are careless in the day of grace, shall be speechless in the day of judgment.

I am sensible of many defects in these papers, (as well as in myself.) They have doubtless, a taste of the distractions of the times wherein they were written; nor was I willing to keep them so long under hand as the accurateness and exactness with which such a subject ought to have been handled, did require. Had I designed my own credit, I should have observed that counsel, *Nonumque prematur in annum*, i. e. To have kept it much longer under the file, before I had exposed it to public view; but I rather inclined to Solomon's counsel, "Whatever thy hand finds out to do, do it with all thy "might: for there is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the "grave, whither thou art going," Eccl. ix. 10.

I apprehend a necessity of some such means to be used for the instruction and conviction of country people; who either are not capable of understanding truth in another dialect, or at least are less affected with it. The preposition in every chapter consists of an observation in husbandry; wherein, if I have failed in using any improper expression, your candour will cover it, and impute it to my unacquaintedness in rural affairs:

———*In magnis voluisse sat est.*

The reddition or application, you will find I hope, both pertinent and close. The reflections serious, and such as (I hope) your consciences will faithfully improve. I have shut up every chapter with a *Poem*, an innocent bait to catch the reader's soul.

That of *Herbert* is experimentally true:

A verse may find him that a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.

I should never have been persuaded (especially in this scribbling age, wherein we may complain with the poet,

Scribimus indocti, doctique poemata passim)

to have set my dull fancy upon the rack to extort a poem to entertain my reader; for I cannot say with Ovid, *Sponte sua carmen*, &c. but that I have been informed, that many seamen, induced by the pleasure of a verse, have taken much pains to learn the poems in their compass by heart; and I hope both the children at home, and the servants in the fields, will learn to exercise themselves this way also. O, how much better will it be so to do, than so stuff their memories with obscene ballads, and filthy songs, which corrupt their minds, and dispose them to much wickedness, by irritating their natural corruption! But these are purer flames, you will find nothing here of such a tendency.

'Tis guilt, not poetry, to be like those,
Whose wit in verse is downright sin in prose.
Whose studies are profaneness, as if then
They only were good poets, when bad men.

D. DIGS.

I shall add no more, but to beg that God who instructeh the husbandman in his civil calling, to teach him wisdom spiritually to improve it, particularly, that you may reap a crop of much spiritual benefit, from that seed which is here sown by the hand of the Lord's unprofitable servant, and in him,

Your very affectionate

Friend and Servant,

JOHN FLAVEL.

To the CHRISTIAN READER.

THERE are three things wherein (as it hath been said long before my day) the exercise of godliness doth chiefly consist: Prayer, temptation, meditation: Meditation is the subject of the following manual. The object of meditation is twofold. *First*, The word. *Secondly*, The works of God. The works of God are twofold. *First*, Internal. *Secondly*, External. The External works of God are twofold. *First*, Of creation, *Secondly*, Of providence. The works of providence are likewise twofold. *First*, In things civil, the Lord ordering and over-ruling all the affairs and motions of single persons, families, and nations, in a subserviency to his own most holy ends, designs, and purposes. *Secondly*, In things natural, the Lord instructing the husbandman to discretion, and teaching him how to dress and till the earth, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; as also how to breed up and manage the beasts of the field, both greater and lesser cattle, for the use and service of man.

Meditation upon this lower part of the works of God, and his wonderful providences about them, may raise our souls very high;

and while we wisely consider these natural things, we may grow more and more wise, in and for spirituals and eternals.

The worthy and ingenious Author of the ensuing discourse hath supplied us with an excellent help, for the spiritualizing of the providential works of God in natural things, by godly meditations; we chiefly want the help of the Holy Spirit (without which all other helps and helpers are altogether insufficient) to frame and wind up our hearts for this both profitable and delightful duty; yet the help which the Lord is pleased to give us for our direction in it, by the ministry of man, is not only not to be refused, but thankfully received and improved; and all little enough to bring our minds to, or keep them at this work: The best of saints, on this side heaven, have, though they are not earthly-minded only, much earth in their minds; which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, presseth them down when they would make an essay to mount upward in meditation. We find it no easy matter to keep off earthly thoughts, when we are most seriously engaged in heavenly work; how hard is it then to get in, and be fixed upon heavenly thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly work; yea, are (for so is the husbandman) working the very earth, and raking in the bowels of it? It is a great part of our holiness to be spiritually-minded, while we are conversing with God through Jesus Christ in spiritual duties; but to be spiritually minded, and to mind spiritual things, when we are conversing with the clods of the earth, and the furrows of the field; when we have to do with corn and grass, with trees and plants, with sheep and oxen; when we behold the birds and fowls of the air, the worms, and all that creep upon the ground; then, I say, to be spiritually-minded, and thence to have our thoughts ascending, and soaring up to God, in heart-affecting and quickening contemplations, witnesseth an high degree of holiness, and of gracious attainments. To make a ladder out of the earthly materials, for the raising of ourselves in spirit up to heaven, is the *art of arts*. Holy and happy indeed are they who, being taught of God, have learned this art, and live in daily practice of it. Earthly objects usually hinder us in our way, sometimes turn us quite out of our way to heaven. Many plow and sow, dig and delve the earth, till their hearts become as earthly as the earth itself: Many deal about the beasts of the field till themselves become even brutish. Is it not then a blessed design which this Author aims and drives at, so to spiritualize all sorts, or the whole compass of earthly husbandry, that all sorts of husbandmen may become spiritual and heavenly? It seems to be a token of good, that God hath an intendment of some special good to the souls of such as are by profession proper husbandmen, seeing he hath lately put it into the hearts of two faithful *ministers (who with all of that profession, are husbandmen in a figure) to undertake, though in a different

* Mr. Richard Steel, and this Author.

way, this subject, and to publish their labours in print, that they may be of use, not only for the present age, but for posterity.

And that the husbandman may be pleased as well as profited, in perusing the labours of this author; he hath, with singular aptness and acuteness, contrived and contracted the sum and scope of every chapter into an elegant distich, or pair of verses, placed at the head of it, and concluded it with a choice melodious poem suitable to, and dilating upon the whole matter of it. These the husbandman, who can but read, may quickly learn and sing for his solace, instead of those vain ballads and corrupting rhymes, which many of that rank are apt to buy and solace themselves withal, without any benefit, yea, much to their hurt, making their hearts more corrupt, carnal, and vain thereby.

Let me add one word more to the reader. This book of Husbandry Spiritualized, is not calculated only for the common husbandman; persons of any calling, or condition, may find the author working out such searching reflections and strong convictions, from almost every part and particular of the husbandman's work, as may prove, if faithfully improved, very useful to them; to some for their awakening, to consider the state of their souls, whether in grace, or in nature; to others for their instruction, consolation, and encouragement in the ways of grace, as also for their proficiency and growth in those ways. That the blessing of the Lord, and the breathings of his good Spirit may go out with it, for all those gracious purposes, is the heart's desire and prayer of him, who is,

CHRISTIAN READER,

A sincere well-wisher to thy precious and immortal soul,

JOSEPH CARYL.

To his Reverend and Learned Friend, Mr. JOHN FLAVEL, *on his Spiritual Navigation and Husbandry.*

LETTERS of mark to his dear servant given,
By him that sists the ruffling winds of heaven:
To fight and take all such as would not deign
T' acknowledge him the sea's great Sovereign.
He launch'd his little *pinnace*, and began
T' attack the vassals of *Leviathan*.
Auspicious gales swelling his winged sails,
Searches all creeks, and every bark he hails;
That scarce a ship our Western coast afford,
Which his brave *pinnace* has not laid aboard.

And what among our riddles some might count,
Was seen at once at Berwick, and the *Mount.*
Yea, in more *ports* hath in one *lustre* been,
Than Hawkins, Drake, or Cavendish have seen.
And prizes of more worth brought home again,
Than all the *plate-fleets* of the kings of Spain.
But that which makes the wonder swell the more,
Those whom he took were *beggars* all before.
But rests he here? No, no, our friend doth know,
'Tis good to have two strings unto his bow.
Our rare Amphibion loves not to be pent
Within the bounds of one poor element.
Besides the learned author understood,
That of an idle hand there comes no good.
The law to him no *pulpit* doth allow,
And now he cannot *preach*, he means to *plow*,
Though preaching were a crime, yet he foresaw
Against the plowman there could be no law.
Nor stays he on resolves, but out-of-hand
He yokes his teem, plows up the stubborn land;
Sows it with precious seed, harrows again
The tougher clods, takes pleasure in his pain.
Whilst, Orpheus-like, (which doth his art advance)
Rocks, fields, and woods, *after his pipe do dance.*
Industrious spirit, to what a rich account
With thy blest Lord, with all these labours mount!
That every nerve of thy best soul dost ply,
To further heaven's *spiritual husbandry.*
This kind of tillage which thou teachest us,
Was never dreamt of by Triptolemus.
Go, reader, turn the leaves; and me allow
To pray (whilst at work) *God speed the plow.*

NICHOLAS WATTS.

In Authoris Opera.

LET Paracelsus and Van Helmont's name,
No more ride triumph on the wings of fame.
Lo, here's a *chymist*, whose diviner skill
Doth *hallowed* from unhallowed things distil.
Spiritualizeth sea-affairs; again,
Makes the rude ground turn tutor unto men.
Shews *Mariners*, as by a compass, how
They may unto the *port* of glory row.

Teacheth the *plowmen*, from their work, to know
What duties unto God and man they owe.
Rare artist! who, when many tongues are mute,
Mak'st things that are inanimate confute
The age's sins; by preaching unto eyes,
Truths which in other modes their ears despise.
Prosper his pious labours, Lord! howe'er
Do not forget to crown the labourer.

Sic raptim canit,

DAN. CONDY.

To his Reverend and Invaluable Friend, Mr. J. F. *upon his* Husbandry Spiritualized.

INGENIOUS Sir, what do I see? what now!
Are you come from the pulpit to the plow?
If so, then pardon me, if I profess,
The plow deserves to be sent to the press.
'Tis not long since you went to sea, they say,
Compos'd a compass which directs the way,
And steers the course to heaven; O blest art!
And bravely done that you did that impart
To us, who take it kindly at your hand,
And bless the Lord that you are come to land,
To be an husbandman, wherein your skill,
With admiration doth your readers fill.
One grain will yield increase, 'tis ten times ten,
When the earth's manur'd by such husbandmen.
We may expect rich harvests, and full crops,
When heavenly dew descendeth in such drops
Of spiritual rain, to water every field,
That it full heaps of grace to God may yield.
I must adore the wisdom of that God
That makes men wise, who, even from a clod
of earth, can raise such heavenly meditation
Unto a pitch of highest elevation.
Besides, I mark the goodness of the Lord,
Performing unto us his faithful word,
That all should work for good unto the saints,
Which, in some measure, lessens our complaints.
For though our pulpit-mercies be grown less,
We have some gracious helps yet from the press.
And herein all the world may plainly see,
That faithful servants will not idle be.

We have some bricks, although the straw be gone,
The church, at last, shall be of polish'd stone.
Whatever men or devils act or say,
Sion, at last, will have a glorious day.
The wretched muck-worm, that from morn to night
Labours, as if 'twere for an heav'nly weight;
And, when he hath got all he can, the most
Amounts to little more than a poor crust,
To feed his tir'd carcase: If himself
Have, by his carking, got a little pelf,
Leave it he must, to one he knows not whom,
And then must come to an eternal doom;
And hear his poor neglected, wretched soul
Tell him at last that he hath play'd the fool.
But here he's taught, how he, before he die,
May lay up treasure for eternity;
Wherein he may be rich, yea, much, much more,
Than they that do possess whole mines of ore.
When earth's more worth than heav'n, and gold than grace,
Then let the worldling run his brutish race;
But not before, unless he do intend
To meet with soul-destruction in the end.
But I must leave him, and return again
To gratulate the author for his pain.
And here I can't forbear to bid my pen
To tell the world of all the husbandmen,
That e'er I met, he, he hath hit the vein
To recompense the labourer's hard pain,
And taught him how to get the greatest gain.
Wherein he treads a path not trode before;
By which, indeed, his skill appears the more.
I might *encomiums* give him, great and true,
And yet come very short of what's his due;
But I must not walk in forbidden ways,
For thereby I am sure, I should displease
His pious mind, who doth, and freely can
Give all the praise to the great husbandman;
Who will his graces in his servants own,
But doth expect himself to wear the crown.
Farewell, dear Sir, I take my leave, and now,
Will say no more than this, *God speed the plow.*

EDWARD JEFFERY.

The EPISTLE, to the intelligent Country READER.

THOU hast here the fruit of some of my spare hours, which were thus employed, when, by a sad providence, I was thrust

from the society of many dear friends, into a solitary country-dwelling. I hope none will envy me these innocent delights, which I made out of my lonely walks, whereby the Lord sweetened my solitudes there. It is like thou wilt find some passages here, that are harmlessly pleasant; yet, I assure thee, I know of none that the most *Cynical Reader* can censure, as sinfully light and vain. I must acknowledge, to the praise of God, that I have found some of those (which, possibly, some of my readers will call the slightest and most trifling subjects of meditation) to be the ordinances for instruction, caution and consolation to my own soul; yea, such a degree of comfort, I do profess to have found by these things, as hath much endeared the country-life to me, and made me much better to understand that saying of Horace, than when I learned it at school,

Novistine locum potiorem rure beato?
Est ubi plus tepeant hyems? Ubi gratior aura?
O rus, quando ego te adspiciam? Quandoque licebit
Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus hortis
Ducere solicitæ jucunda oblivio vitæ, (i. e.)
What life can with the country life compare?
Where breathes the purest, and most healthful air.
Where, undisturb'd, my study I pursue,
And, when I sleep, bid all my cares adieu. *Hor. Sat. 6.*

And what I have found so beneficial to myself, I cannot but think may be so to others. I assure thee, reader, I am not fond of any of these conceptions; and yet I think I may modestly enough say, That the emptiest leaf of this book may serve for more, and better uses, than a mere diversion, when thou canst find leisure to peruse it. I know, your troubles and cares are many; and though your condition of life hath many innocent comforts and outward mercies to sweeten it, yet I believe most of you have found that ancient saying of Anacreon experimentally true: Εχει το πικρον της γεωργιας γλυκυ.

'Some bitter troubles countrymen do meet,
'Wherewith the Lord doth intermix their sweet.'

The *cares* of your *minds* are commonly no less than the *pains* of your *bodies;* it concerns you, therefore, to *sweeten* what you cannot *avoid*; and I know no better way for that, than what is here directed to. O friends! what advantages have you for a spiritual life? Why may you not have two harvests every year? One for your souls, another for your bodies; if you could thus learn to husband your husbandry. Methinks spiritual meditations do even put themselves upon you. Husbandmen of old were generally presumed to be honest and good men; what else means that saying of Menander, Αγροικος ειναι προσποιη πονηρος ων.

'Profess thyself an husbandman,
'And wicked too! believe't that can!'

What you are, godly or wicked, is not for me (that am a stranger to most of you) to determine; but if you are not godly, it is my de-

sire and design to make you so: and I could not think on a more probable mean to accomplish this honest design, than what I have here used. Methinks it should be a pleasure to you, when you come weary out of the fields from plough, or any other labour, to sit down in the evening, and read that chapter which concerns that particular business, and refresh your souls, even from that which hath wearied your bodies. Were your hearts but heavenly, and more time allowed for spiritual husbandry, your inward comforts would be much more, and your outward gains not a jot less; for if the success of all your civil labours and employments depend upon the pleasure and will of God, (as all that are not atheists do acknowledge) then, certainly, your business can succeed never the worse for your endeavours to please him, upon whose pleasure it so entirely depends. I have many times lifted up my heart to heaven, whilst these papers were under my hand, for a special blessing to accompany them, when they should be in yours. If the Lord accomplish my desires by them upon your souls you shall enjoy two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. Would not that be sweet? The historian tells us, that Altitius Serarious was sowing corn in the field, when Q. Cincinnatus came to him bare-headed with letters from the senate, signifying, that he was chosen to the dictatorship. I hope the Lord will so bless and succeed these labours, that many of you will be called from holding the *plough* on earth, to wear the *crown* of glory in heaven; which is the sincere desire of

Your hearty well-wisher,

JOHN FLAVEL.

The AUTHOR to the READER.

COME you, whose listening ears do even itch
To hear the way prescrib'd of growing rich;
I'll shew you how to make your tenements
Ten thousand times more worth, and yet your rents
Not rais'd a farthing; here my reader sees
A way to make his dead and barren trees
Yield precious fruit; his sheep, though ne'er so bad,
Bear golden fleeces, such ne'er Jason had:
In every thing your gain shall more than double,
And all this had with far less toil and trouble.
Methinks I hear thee say, This cannot be,
I'll ne'er believe it. Well, read on and see.
Reader, hadst thou but senses exercis'd
To judge aright; were spiritual things but priz'd
At their just value, thou would'st quickly say,

'Tis so indeed; thou wouldst not go thy way
Like one that's disappointed, and so fling
The book aside. *I thought 'twas some such thing.*
Time was when country Christians did afford
More hours and pains about God's holy word:
Witness the man who did most gladly pay
For some few leaves his whole cart-load of hay.
And time shall be, when heavenly truth that warms
The heart, shall be preferr'd before your farms;
When holiness, as sacred scripture tells,
Shall be engraven on the horses bells.
Lord, hasten on those much desired times,
And, to that purpose, bless those rural rhymes.

THE PROEM.

1 Cor. iii. 9. *Ye are God's Husbandry.*

THE scope and design of the following chapters, being the spiritual improvement of husbandry, it will be necessary, by way of *proem*, to acquaint the reader with the foundation, and general rules of this art in the scriptures, thereby to procure greater respect unto, and prevent prejudices against composures of this kind.

To this end, I shall entertain the reader a little while upon what this scripture affords, which will give a fair introduction to the following discourse.

The apostle's scope in the context being to check and repress the vain glory and emulation of the Corinthians, who, instead of thankfulness for, and an humble and diligent improvement of the excellent blessings of the ministry, turned all into vain ostentation and emulation, one preferring Paul, and another Apollos; in the mean time depriving themselves of the choice blessings they might have received from them both.

To cure this growing mischief in the churches, he checks their vanity, and discovers the evil of such practices by several arguments, amongst which this is one,

Ye are God's Husbandry, q. d.

What are ye, but a field or plot of ground, to be manured and cultivated for God? And what are Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, but so many workmen and labourers, employed by God, the great Husbandman, to plant and water you all?

If, then, you shall glory in some, and despise others, you take the ready way to deprive yourselves of the benefits and mercies you might receive from the joint ministry of them all. God hath used me to plant you, and Apollos to water you; you are obliged to bless him for

the ministry of both, and it will be your sin if you despise either. If the workmen be discouraged in their labours, it is the field that loses and suffers by it; so the words are a similitude, serving to illustrate the relation,

1. Which the churches have to God.

2. Which God's ministers have to the churches.

1. The relation betwixt God and them is like that of an husbandman to his ground or tillage. The Greek word signifies God's * *arable*, or that plot of ground which God manures by the ministry of pastors and teachers.

2. It serves to illustrate the relation that the ministers of Christ sustain to the churches, which is like that of the husbandman's servants to him and his fields; which excellent notion carries in it the perpetual necessity of a gospel ministry. (For what fruit can be expected, where there are none to till the ground?) As also the diligence, accountableness, and rewards which these labourers are to give to, and receive from God, the great Husbandman. All runs into this,

That the life and employment of an husbandman, excellently shadows forth the relation betwixt God and his church, and the relative duties betwixt its ministers and members.

Or more briefly thus:

The church is God's husbandry, about which his ministers are employed.

I shall not here observe my usual method, (intending no more but a preface to the following discourse) but only open the particulars wherein the resemblance consists; and then draw some Corollaries from the whole. The first I shall dispatch in these twenty particulars following:

1. *Prop.* The husbandman purchases his fields, and gives a valuable consideration for them, Jer. xxxii. 9, 10.

Reddit. So hath God purchased his church with a full valuable price, even the precious blood of his own Son, Acts xx. 28. "Feed "the church of God which he hath purchased, or acquired with his "own blood." O dear-bought inheritance! how much doth this bespeak its worth! Or rather, the high esteem God hath of it, to pay down blood, and such blood for it; never was any inheritance bought at such a rate: every particular elect person, and none but such are comprehended in this purchase; the rest still remain in the devil's right. Sin made a forfeiture of all to justice, upon which Satan entered, and took possession, and, as the strong man armed, still keeps it in them, Luke xi. 21. but upon payment of this sum to justice, the elect (who only are intended in this purchase) pass over into God's right and property, and now are neither Satan's, Acts xxvi. 18.

* The faithful (or believers) are called God's husbandry, (γεωργιον, *georgeon*) because God cultivates them as land by means of spiritual teachers (or pastors) *Rav.*

nor their own, 1 Cor. vi. 19. but the *Lord's peculiar*, 1 Pet. ii. 6. And to shew how much they are his own, you have two *possessives* in one verse. Cant. viii. 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before "me, mine, which is mine."

2. *Prop.* Husbandmen divide and separate their own lands from other men's, they have their land-marks and boundaries, by which property is preserved, Deut. xxvii. 17. Prov. xxii. 28.

Reddit. So are the people of God wonderfully separated and distinguished from all the people of the earth. Psal. iv. 3. "The Lord "hath set apart him that is godly for himself. And the Lord knoweth "who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. It is a special act of grace, to be inclosed by God out of the waste howling wilderness of the world, Deut. xxxiii. 16. This did God *intentionally*, in the decree before the world was; which decree is executed in their sanctification and adoption.

3. *Prop.* Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the husbandman with hedges and ditches, to preserve their fruits from beasts that would otherwise over-run and destroy them———*Non minor est virtus quam quærere parta tueri.* It is as good husbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

Reddit. "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, "and he fenced it," Isa. v. 1, 2. No inheritaace is better defended and secured, than the Lord's inheritance, Psal. cxxv. 2. "As the "mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about "his people." So careful is he for their safety, "that he createth "upon every dwelling-place of mount Sion, and upon her assem- "blies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire "by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence," Isa. iv. 5. Not a particular saint, but is hedged about and inclosed in arms of power and love, Job i. 10. "Thou hast made a hedge about him," The devil fain would, but by his own confession could not break over the hedge to touch Job, till God's permission made a gap for him: yea, he not only made an hedge, but a wall about them, and that of fire, Zech. ii. 5. Sets a guard of angels "to encamp round "about them that fear him," Psal. xxxiv. 7. And will not trust them with a single guard of angels neither, though their power be great, and love to the saints as great; but watches over them himself also, Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. "Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine, "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any "hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

4. *Prop.* Husbandmen carry out their compost, to fertilize their arable ground, they dung it, dress it, and keep it in heart; and in these western parts are at great charges to bring lime, and salt-water-sand to quicken their thin and cold soil.

Reddit. "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, "and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well, if not, cut it down," Luke xiii. 8. O the rich dressing which God bestows upon his churches!

they are costly fields indeed, dressed and fertilized, not only by precious ordinances and providences, but also by the sweat, yea, blood of the dispensers of them. "You Londoners (saith Mr. Lockier *in* "*Colos.* p. 552.) are trees watered choicely indeed; it is storied of "the palm-tree, that at its first transplanting into Italy, it was wa- "tered with wine. I cannot say (saith he) that you have been so "watered by me, I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly say, "that if our choicest strength and spirits may be named instead of "water, wine; or if the blessing which hath gone along with these "waters, at any time, hath turned them into wine, in vigour upon "your souls, then hath God by me, watered your roots with wine."

5. *Prop.* The husbandman builds his house, where he makes his purchase, dwells upon his land, and frequently visits it; he knows that such as dwell far from their *lands*, are not far from *loss.*

Reddit. So doth God; wherever he plants a church, there doth he fix his habitation, intending there to dwell, Psalm xlvi. 5. "God "is in the midst of her," she shall not be moved. Thus God came to dwell upon his own fee and inheritance, in Judea, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. "And I will set my tabernacle amongst you, and will be "your God, and ye shall be my people." Which promise is again renewed to his churches of the New Testament, 2 Cor. vi. 16. And when the churches shall be in their greatest flourish and purity, then shall there be the fullest and most glorious manifestation of the divine presence among them, Rev. xxi. 3. "And I heard a great voice "out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, "and he will dwell with them, and be their God." Hence the assemblies are called, the places of his feet——And there they "be- "hold the beauty of the Lord," Psalm xxvii.

6. *Prop.* Husbandmen grudge not at the cost they are at for their tillage; but as they lay out vast sums upon it, so they do it cheerfully.

Reddit. "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Ju- "dah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard; what could "have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? And as he bestows upon his heritage the choicest mercies, so he doth it with the greatest cheerfulness; for he saith, Jer. xxxii. 41. "I "will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in "this land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole "soul." It is not the giving out of mercy (saith one) that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his mercy back again upon him by the creature's ingratitude.

7. *Prop.* When husbandmen have been at cost and pains about their husbandry, they expect fruit from it, answerable to their pains and expences about it: "Behold (said James) the husbandman "waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth," Jam. v. 7.

Reddit. "And he looked that it should bring forth fruit," Isa. v.

2. This heavenly Husbandman waits for the fruits of his fields also; never did any husbandman long for the desired harvest, more than God doth for the fruits of holiness from his saints: Great are the expectations of God from his people: "And when the time of the "fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they "might receive the fruits of it."

8. *Prop.* Husbandmen are much delighted, to see the success of their labours; it comforts them over all their hard pains, and many weary days to see a good increase.

Reddit. Much more is God delighted in beholding the flourishing graces of his people; it pleases him to see his plants laden with fruit, and his valleys sing with corn, Cant. vi. 2. "My beloved is gone "down to the garden, into his beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, "and to gather lilies." These beds of spices (say * expositors) are the particular churches, the companies of believers; he goes to feed in these gardens, like as men go to their gardens to make merry, or to gather fruit, Cant. iv. 16. "He eats his pleasant fruit," viz. His people's holy performances, sweeter to him than any *ambrosio;* thus he feeds in the gardens, and he gathers lilies when he translates good souls into his kingdom above; "For the Lord taketh pleasure "in his saints, and will beautify the meek with salvation."

9. *Prop.* The husbandman is exceedingly grieved when he sees the hopes of a good crop disappointed, and his fields prove barren, or blasted.

Reddit. So the Lord expresses his grief for, and anger against his people, when they bring forth no fruits, or wild fruits, worse than none, Hosea ix. 16. "Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up." Christ was exceedingly displeased with the fig-tree, and cursed it for its barrenness; it grieves him to the heart when his servants return to him with such complaints as these, "We have laboured in "vain, we have spent our strength for nought."

10. *Prop.* Husbandmen employ many labourers to work in their fields, there is need of many hands for such a multiplicity of business.

Reddit. God hath diversity of workmen also in the churches whom he sends forth to labour in his spiritual fields, Eph. iv. 12. "He gave "some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some "pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work "of the ministry," Amos iii. 7. I have sent [*my servants*] *the prophets.* It is usual with the apostles to place this title of a servant among their honorary titles, though a profane mouth once called it, *probrosum artificium*, a sordid artifice. Christ hath stampt a great deal of dignity upon his ministers, in retaining them for the nearest service to himself, 1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man so account of us, as the "ministers of Christ;" they are workers together with God: The

* Christ is fed when he sees the graces of his people; he gathers lilies when he translates any good soul out of this life. *Trap. on the place.*

husbandman works in the field among his labourers, and the great God disdaineth not to work in, and with his poor servants, in the work of the ministry.

11. *Prop.* The work about which husbandmen employ their servants in the field, is toilsome and spending, you see they come home at night as weary as they can draw their legs after them.

Reddit. But God's workmen have a much harder task than they; hence are they set forth in scripture by the laborious ox, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Rev. iv. 7. Some derive the word διακονος, *deacon*, from κονις, which signifies dust, to shew the laboriousness of their employment, labouring till even choaked with dust and sweat. It is said of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 13. "That for the work of Christ he was sick, and "nigh unto death; not regarding his life, to supply their lack of "service." The apostle's expression, Col. i. *ult.* is very emphatical, "Whereunto I also labour, striving, according to his working, "which worketh in me mightily." The word αγωνιζωμενος, signifies such spending labour as puts a man into an agony; and blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

12. *Prop.* The immediate end of the husbandman's labour, and his servants labour is for the improvement of his land, to make it more flourishing and fruitful.

Reddit. The scope and end of the ministry is for the church's benefit and advantage. They must not lord it over God's heritage, as if the church were for them, and not they for the church; nor serve themselves of it, but be the church's servants for Jesus sake, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The power they have received being for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. Christ hath given them to the churches; their gifts, their time, their strength, and all their ministerial talents, are not their own, but the church's stock and treasure.

13. *Prop.* The workmen that labour in the fields are accountable for their work to him that employed them.

Reddit. Church-officers are also accountable to God for all the souls committed to them. They are stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and stewards are accountable. "We watch for "your souls, (saith the apostle) as they that must give an account," Heb. xiii. 7. If these servants be unfaithful in their work and trust, the blood of souls shall be required at their hands, Ezek. iii. 17, 18. which are *fulmina, non verba*, (saith Erasmus) thunderbolts rather than words. The guilt of blood is the greatest guilt; and of all blood, the blood of souls.

14. *Prop.* Those that spend their time and strength all their days, in manuring and plowing in the fields, do maintain themselves and their families by their labours; their hands are sufficient for themselves and theirs.

Reddit. "Even so hath God ordained, that they which preach the "gospel, should live by the gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. "The work-

" man is worthy of his meat," Mat. x. 10. It is a sad thing, if those who break the bread of life to souls, should be suffered to want bread themselves. God would not have the mouth of an ox muzzled that treads out the corn, but have liberty to eat as well as work. Yet if any pretended to the ministry be like the heifer, that loves to tread out the corn, i. e. cares to do no work, but such as brings in present pay; he therein sufficiently discovers his beast-like disposition. Ministers must be faithful in their Master's work, and if men do not, God will reward them. For " he is not unrighteous to forget their " work, and labour of love," Heb. vi. 10.

15. *Prop.* It is a great trouble to husbandmen in a busy time, to be put off from their labours by stormy weather, which drives them out of the fields, and makes them let all lie, till it clear up again; yet mean while, they are not idle, but employ themselves in home-work.

Reddit. Even so in God's husbandry, it is an unspeakable affliction to God's workmen to be rendered useless and unserviceable to the churches, by those storms of trouble, which drive them from their public ministerial work. With what a heavy heart did Paul go off from his work at Ephesus, Acts xx. It spends a minister to preach, but more to be silent. It is a loud speaking judgment, when God shall say to them as to Ezekiel, " Son of man, I will make thy " tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb," Ezek. iii. 26. Such silencing providences, speak thundering language to gracious hearts; yet, even then, the keepers of the vineyard have a private vineyard of their own to look after, they have much home-work, when no out-work.

16. *Prop.* There is a vast difference betwixt those fields which have been well husbanded and dressed by a skilful and diligent husbandman; and those that have been long out of husbandry. How fragrant is the one? How dry and barren the other? When you pass by a field well dressed and fenced, every thing prosperous, and in exquisite order, you may know, without farther enquiry, that a good husbandman lives there.

Reddit. Thus stands the case betwixt those places which God hath blessed with a faithful, painful ministry, and such as have none, or worse than none: for as the husbandman's cost and pains appear in the verdant and fragrant hue of his fields; so a minister's pains and diligence are ordinarily seen in the heavenly lives, and flourishing graces of the people. The churches of Corinth and Thessalonica, where Paul and other holy instruments spent much of their time and pains, became famous and flourishing churches, 2 Cor. ix. 2. A special blessing comes along with a godly minister, to the place where special providence assigns him. Such places, like Gideon's fleece, have the dew of heaven lying on them, whilst others round about dre dry and barren.

17. *Prop.* The husbandman is not discouraged, though the seed

lie long under the clods; he knows it will spring up at the last, and reward him, or those that come after him, for their pains and patience in waiting for it.

Reddit. Ministers should not be presently discouraged in their work, because they see but little or no appearance of all the seed they have sown among the people. The "servant of the Lord must be "patient towards all, waiting if at any time God will give them re- "pentance," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. And if it never spring up in his time, it may after his death; and if so, he shall not fail of his reward, John iv. 36, 37. "And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, "and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth, and "he that reapeth, may rejoice together; and herein is that saying "true, one soweth, and another reapeth." Though ministers die, yet their words live; yea, their words take hold of men when they are in the dust, Zech. i. 6.

18. *Prop.* Husbandmen find low grounds and vallies, most fertile; hills, how lofty soever they overtop the lower grounds, yet answer not the husbandman's pains as the vallies do: these are best watered and secured from the scorching heat of the sun.

Reddit. Experience shews us, that the humblest saints are most fruitful under the gospel; "These are they that receive with meek- "ness the engraffed word," James i. 21. whose influences abide in them, as the rain doth in the low vallies. Happy is that minister, whose lot falls in such a pleasant valley. "Blessed are they that sow "beside all such waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox "and the ass," Isa. xxxii. 20. among these vallies run the pleasant springs and purling brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring ground. Heavenly ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

19. *Prop.* The first crop is usually the best, and the longer the husbandman tills his ground, the less it produces; after a few years its vigour and strength is spent.

Reddit. The first entertainment of the gospel is commonly the best; and what good is done by the ministry is often done at its first entrance. New things are pretty, and very taking. "John at first "was to the Jews a burning and shining light, and they were willing "[for a season] to rejoice in his light," John v. 35. Paul was highly valued among the Galatians at first; such was their zeal, that they could have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him! but how quickly did this full tide ebb again? For he complains, Gal. iv. 15. "Where then is the blessedness ye spake of?"

20. *Prop. Lastly,* When fields prove barren, and will not quit the husbandman's cost, nor answer the seed he sows in them, he plucks up the hedges, and lays it waste.

Reddit. So when churches grow formal and fruitless, the Lord removes his gospel-presence from them, plucks up the hedge of his protection from about them, and lays them open as waste ground to

be over-run by their enemies. Jer. vii. 12. "Go to Shiloh, and see "what I did unto it." What is become of those once famous and flourishing churches of Asia? Are they not laid waste, and trodden down by infidels? And now go to, saith the great Husbandman, "I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will pull up the "hedge thereof, and it shall be laid waste," Isa. v. 5.

Thus you see the allegory opened in its particulars: from the whole, I shall present you with these five ensuing *corollaries*.

The first Corollary.

How great then are the dignities and privileges of the churches of Jesus Christ whom he hath appropriated to himself, above all the people of the earth, to be his peculiar inheritance? The rest of the world is a waste wilderness; all other places, how pleasant soever, in respect of their natural amenity and delights, are truly enough called the dark places of the earth; dismal, solitary cells, where *Ziim* and *Iim*, Bitterns, Cormorants, and every doleful creature dwells. But the church is the paradise of the earth, *a garden inclosed*, Cant. iv. 12. in whose hedges the gospel birds chirp and sing melodiously, Cant. ii. 12. Its beds are beds of spices, Cant. vi. 2. and betwixt its pleasant banks, a crystal river of living water runs, Rev. xxii. 1. the streams whereof make glad the city of God, in the midst whereof the Lord himself delights to walk. O Zion, with what pleasures doth thou abound? If Bernard was so ravished with the delights of his *monastry*, because of its green banks, and shady bowers, and herbs, and trees, and various objects to feed his eyes, and fragrant smells, and sweet and various tunes of birds, together with the opportunities of devout contemplation, that he cried out admiringly, *Lord! what delight dost thou provide, even for the poor!* How much more should we be ravished with Zion's glory? For, *beautiful for situation is mount Zion*. Of whom it may much more truly be said, what a * chronicler of our own once said of England, That it is the fortunate island, the paradise of pleasure, the garden of God, whose vallies are like Eden, whose hills are as Lebanon, whose springs are as Pisgah, whose rivers are as Jordan, whose wall is the ocean, and whose defence is the Lord Jehovah. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee? Who can count the privileges wherewith Christ hath invested his churches? O let it never seem a light thing in our eyes, that we grow within his blessed inclosure. How sweet a promise is that, Exod. xix. 5. "Ye "shall be to me a peculiar treasure, above all people; for all the "earth is mine."

The second Corollary.

Hence it follows, That spiritual barrenness is a great reproach and shame to Christians. Shall God's husbandry, which is planted, watered, fenced, filled with favours and mercies, be like the barren heath in the desart? Surely it should be said of every soul that grows here,

* Speed's Chronicle.

as the historian saith of Spain, that there is *nihil infructuosum, nihil sterile;* nothing barren or unfruitful in it. God's vineyard is planted in a very fruitful hill. Isa. v. 1. "And surely they that are "planted in the house of the Lord, should flourish in the courts of "our God; they should bring forth fruit, even in old age, to shew "that God is upright," Psal. xcii. 13, 14. "They are created in "Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained they "should walk in," Eph. ii. 10. "They are married unto Christ, that "they might bring forth fruit to God," Rom. vii. 4. An empty branch is a dishonour to the root that bears it, a barren field to the husbandman that owns it; God cannot endure that in his fields which he suffers in the wilderness.

The third Corollary.

If the church be God's husbandry, then there is such a special, gracious presence of the Lord in his churches, as is not to be found in all the world beside. Where may you expect to find the husbandman but in his own fields? There lies his business, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find God but in the assemblies of his saints? "He walks among the golden candlesticks," Rev. ii. 1. I will walk among you, (saith he) and be your God, 2 Cor. vi. 16. Upon this account the church is called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there, Ezek. xlviii. *ult.* You may see the footsteps of God in the creatures, but the face of God is only to be seen in his ordinances. Hence, Psal. xxvii. 4. "David longed for the "temple, that he might see the beauty of the Lord. Now what is beauty, but a symmetry and proportion of parts? In the works of *creation* you see one attribute manifested in one thing, and another in another thing; but in the *sanctuary* you may see beauty, even in all the attributes of God displayed there: And, indeed, we find in scripture such astonishing expressions about the visions of God in his church, that in reading them, a man can see little difference betwixt it and heaven; for as the church is called heaven, Mat. xxv. 1. so its description is like that of heaven. Heb. xii. 22, 23. "You are "come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company "of angels," &c. And Rev. xxii. 4. "They shall see his face, and his "name shall be written in their foreheads." And ver. 6. The saints are represented "standing nearer to the throne of God than the "angels themselves." Hence also ordinances are called galleries, in which both saints and angels walk, beholding the glory of him that sits upon the throne. Zech. iii. 7. "If you will keep my ways, I "will give you galleries to walk in among them that stand by."

The fourth Corollary.

If the church be God's husbandry, then those that be employed in ministerial work ought to be men of great judgment and experience in soul affairs; for these are the labourers whom God, the mystical Husbandman employs and entrusts about his spiritual husband-

ry. Should husbandman employ ignoraut persons, that neither understand the rules nor proper seasons of husbandry; how much would such workmen damnify and prejudice him? He will not employ such to weed his fields, as know not wheat from tares; or to prune his trees, that think *midsummer* as fit for that work as December: much less will God. He qualifies all that he sends with wisdom for their work. "His workmen approve themselves workmen "indeed, such as need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of "truth," 2 Tim. ii. 15. As Bezaleel was furnished with wisdom before he was employed in tabernacle-work; so Christ instructs his servants with skill and insight, before they are employed in ministerial work. He gives them a mouth and wisdom, Luke xxi. 15. endues them with power from on high; as Christ was filled abundantly with the Spirit for his work, so, according to proportion, are those that are sent by him. John xx. 21, 22. "As my Father hath "sent me, so send I you." And as for those that run before they are sent, and understand not the mysteries of the gospel; I shall say no more of them but this; "Father, forgive them, for they know "not what they do."

The fifth Corollary.

To conclude, If the church be God's husbandry, that is, if husbandry have so many resemblances of God's works about the church in it; then how inexcusable is the ignorance of husbandmen in the things of God, who, besides the word of the gospel, have the teaching of the creatures; and can hardly turn their hands to any part of their work, but the Spirit hints one spiritual use or other from it to their souls? How do the scriptures abound with parables and lively similitudes taken from husbandry? From the field, the seed, the plow, the barn, from threshing and winnowing; similitudes also from planting, graffing, and pruning of *trees;* and not a few from the ordering of cattle. So that to what business soever you turn your hands, in any part of your calling, still God meets you with one heavenly instruction or other. But alas! How few are able to improve their civil employments to such excellent ends! these things are but briefly hinted in the scriptures, and those hints scattered up and down, that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult so to methodize them, as it is necessary they should be, in order to their due improvement by meditation.

And therefore I judged it necessary to collect and prepare them for your use; and in this manner to present them to you as you find them in the following chapters. Read, consider, and apply; and the Lord make you good husbandmen for your own souls.

THE FIRST PART OF

HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED.

CHAP. I

Upon the Industry of the Husbandman.

In the laborious Husbandman you see,
What all true Christians are, or ought to be.

OBSERVATION.

THE employment of the husbandman is by all acknowledged to be very laborious; there is a multiplicity of business incumbent on him. The end of one work is but the beginning of another, every season of the year brings its proper work with it: sometimes you find him in his *fields*, dressing, plowing, sowing, harrowing, weeding, or reaping; and sometimes in his *barn*, threshing or winnowing; sometimes in his *orchard*, planting, graffing, or pruning his trees; and sometimes among his *cattle*; so that he hath no time to be idle. As he hath a multiplicity of business, so every part of it is full of toil and spending labour: he eats not the bread of idleness, but earns it before he eats it; and, as it were, dips it in his own sweat, whereby it becomes the sweeter to him. Though sin brought in the husbandman's sweat, Gen. iii. 19. yet now not to sweat would increase his sin, Ezek. xvi. 49.

APPLICATION.

Behold here the life of a serious Christian, shadowed forth to the life. As the life of a husbandman, so the life of a Christian is no idle nor easy life. They that take up religion for *ostentation*, and not for an *occupation*, and those that place the business of it in notions and idle speculations, in forms, gestures, and external observances, may think and call it so: but such as devote themselves unto it, and make religion their business, will find it no easy work to exercise themselves to godliness. Many there are that affect the reputation and *sweet* of it who cannot endure the labour and *sweat* of it. If men might be indulged to divide their heart betwxit God and the world, or to cull out the cheap and easy duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and costly ones, it were an easy thing to be a Christian: but surely to have a respect to all God's commandments, to live the life, as well as speak the language of a Christian; to be holy in all manner of conversation, is not so easy. This will be evident, by

comparing the life of a Christian with the life of a husbandman, in these five particulars; wherein it will appear, that the work of a Christian is by much the harder work of the two.

1. The husbandman hath much to do, many things to look after; but the Christian more: if we respect the extensiveness of his work, he hath a large field indeed to labour in, Psal. cxix. 96. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad," of a vast extent and latitude, comprizing not only a multitude of external acts and duties, and guiding the offices of the outward man about them, but also taking in every thought and motion of the inner man within its compass.

You find in the word, a world of work cut out for Christians; there is hearing-work, praying-work, reading, meditating, and self-examining-work; it puts him also upon a constant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. Oh, what a world of work hath a Christian about him? For of them he may say, as the historian doth of Hannibal, they are never quiet, whether conquering or conquered. How many weak, languishing graces hath he to recover, improve, and strengthen? There is a weak faith, a languishing love, dull and faint desires, to be quickened and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a multitude of work do his several relations exact from him? He hath a world of business incumbent on him, as a parent, child, husband, wife, master, servant, or friend, yea, not only to friends, but enemies. And, besides all this, how many difficult things are there to be borne and suffered for Christ? And yet God will not allow his people to neglect any one of them: neither can he be a Christian that hath not respect to every command, and is not holy in all manner of conversation, Psal. cxix. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 11. every one of these duties, like the several spokes in a wheel, come to bear, in the whole round of a Christian's conversation: so that he hath more work upon his hands than the husbandman.

2. The husbandman's work is confessed to be spending work, but not like the Christian's. What Augustus said of the young Roman, is verified in the true Christian, *Quicquid vult, valde vult.* Whatsoever he doth in religion, he doth to purpose. Under the law, God rejected the *snail* and the *ass*, Lev. xi. 30. Exod. xiii. 13. And under the gospel, he allows no sluggish lazy professor, 1 Tim. v. 11, 13. Sleepy duties are utterly unsuitable to the living God; he will have the very spirits distilled and offered up to him in every duty, John iv. 24. he bestows upon his people the very substance and kernel of mercies, and will not accept from them the shells and shadows of duties; not the skin, but the inwards, and the fat that covereth the inwards, were required under the law, Exod. xxix. 30. And every sacrifice under the gospel, must be *sacrificium medullatum*, a sacrifice full of marrow; observe the manner in which their work is to be performed.

Rom. xii. 11. In serving God, fervent in spirit, or hissing hot.

2 Pet. i. 10. In securing salvation, diligent; or doing it thoroughly and enough.

1 Tim. iv. 7. In godliness, exercising or stripping themselves; as for a race.

Luke xiii. 24. In the pursuit of happiness, striving even to an agony.

Acts xxvi. 7. In prayer, serving God instantly; or in a stretched out manner; yea, pouring out their hearts before him, Psal. lxii. 8. as if the body were left like a dead corpse upon the knees, whilst the spirit is departed from it, and ascended to God. This is the manner of his work: judge then how much harder this work is, than to spend the sweet of the brow in manual labour.

3. The husbandman finds his work as he left it, he can begin one day where he left the other; but it is not so with the Christian; a bad heart and a busy devil, disorder and spoil his work every day. The Christian finds not his heart in the morning, as he left it at night; and even when he is about his work, how many set-backs doth he meet with? Satan stands at his right hand (the working hand) to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. when he would do good, evil (the evil of his own heart and nature) is present with him.

4. The husbandman hath some resting-days, when he throws aside all his work, and takes his recreation; but the Christian hath no resting-day, till his dying-day; and then he shall rest from his labours. Religion allows no idle day, "but requires him to be always abounding in the work of the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 18. When one duty is done, another calls for him; the Lord's day is a day of rest to the husbandman, but no day in the week so laborious to the Christian. O it is a spending day to him. When he hath gathered in the crop of one duty, he is not to sit down satisfied therewith, or say as that rich worldling did, Luke xii. 19. "Soul, take thine ease, "thou hast goods laid up for many years;" but must to plow again, and count it well if the vintage reach to the seed-time, Lev. xxvi. 5. I mean, if the strength, influence, and comfort of one duty, hold out to another duty; and that it may be so, and there be no room left for idleness, God hath appointed ejaculatory prayer, to fill up the intervals, betwixt stated and more solemn duties. These are to keep in the fire, which kindled the morning sacrifice, to kindle the evening sacrifice. When can the Christian sit down and say, *Now all my work is ended, I have nothing to do without doors, or within?*

Lastly, There is a time when the labour of the husbandman is ended; old age and weakness takes them off from all employment; they can look only upon their labourers, but cannot do a stroke of work themselves; they can tell you what they did in their younger years, but now (say they) we must leave it to younger people: we cannot be young always; but the Christian is never superannuated as to the work of religion; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Master expects from him. When he is full of days, God expects he should

be full of fruits, Psal. xcii. 14. "They shall bring forth fruit in old "age, they shall be fat and flourishing."

REFLECTIONS.

1. How hard have I laboured for the meat that perisheth? Prevented the dawning of the day, and laboured as in the very fire, and yet is the Christian's work harder than mine? Surely, then, I never yet understood the work of Christianity. Alas, my sleepy prayers, and formal duties, even all that ever I performed in my life, never cost me that pains, that one hour at plow hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at best, so lazily performed religious duties, that I may truly say, I offer to God what cost me nothing. Wo is me, poor Wretch! How is the judgment of Korah spiritually executed upon me? The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up his body; but it hath opened its mouth and swallowed up my heart, my time, and all my affections. How far am I from the kingdom of God!

The worlding's reflection.

2. And how little better is my case, who have indeed professed religion, but never made it my business? Will an empty (though splendid) profession save me? How many brave ships have perished in the storms, notwithstanding their fine names, the *Prosperous*, the *Success*, the *Happy Return?* A fine name could not protect them from the rocks, nor will it save me from hell. I have done by religion, as I should have done by the world; prayed, as if I prayed not; and heard, as if I heard not. I have given to God but the shadow of duty, and can never expect from him a real reward.

The formalist's reflection.

3. How unlike a Christian dost thou also, O my soul, go about thy work; though upright in the main; yet how little zeal and activity dost thou express in thy duties! Awake love and zeal, seest thou not the toil and pains men take for the world? How do they prevent the dawning of the day; and labour as in the very fire till night; and all this for a trifle! Should not every drop of sweat which I see trickle from their brows fetch, as it were, a drop of blood from my heart, who am thus convinced and reproved of shameful laziness, by their indefatigable diligence? Do they pant after the dust of the earth? Amos ii. 7. And shall not I pant after God? Psal. xlii. 1. Ah, my soul, it was not wont to be so with thee in the days of my first profession. Should I have had no more communion with God in duties then, it would have broken my heart: I should have been weary of my life. Is this a time for one to stand idle, who stands at the door of eternity? What, now slack-handed, when so near to my everlasting rest, Rom. xiii. 11. or hast thou found the work of God so unpleasant to thee? Prov. iii. 17. or the trade of godliness so unprofitable? Psal. xix. 12. Or knowest thou not, that millions,

The reflections of a slothful Christian.

now in hell, perished for want of serious diligence in religion, Luke xiii. 34. nor doth my diligence for God, answer to that which Christ hath done and suffered, to purchase my happiness: or to the preparations he hath made in heaven for me? Or dost thou forget that thy Master's eye is always upon thee, whilst thou art lazying and loitering? Or would the damned live at this rate as I do, if their day of grace might be recalled? For shame, my soul, for shame! rouse up thyself, and fall to thy work, with a diligence answerable to the weight thereof; for it is no vain work concerning thee, it is thy life.

THE POEM.

Religion *When* advanc'd in pow'r,
Will make you *Husband* every hour.
'Twill make *Men* strive with all their might,
And therein *Find* a sweet delight.
If there were *Nought* besides that pay
Christ gives *To* cheer us in our way;
Should we not *Do* the best we can?
For there's *No* such reward from man.
Shall others *Work*, and not regard
Their strength *To* get a small reward?
Whilst we *Turn* slugs, and loiter thus?
O that *Their* zeal might quicken us!
Why are our *Hands*, and feet so slow,
When we *Unto* our business go?
How can we *Then* Christ's pay expect,
And yet the *Christian's* work reject,
If this, then *Also* that embrace
Them both; *If* not, we both disgrace.
Some if *They* could these two divide,
'Twould *Please* them well, with Christ to side!
But if they *May* not, then it were
As good *Cease* pleading, they'll not hear:
Rouse up *From* sloth, my soul betake
Thee to thy *Work*, no cavils make.
O strive, *And* try! Saints say that even,
The pain they *Take*, hath much of heaven.
But yet *Their* best wine's kept till last,
Their rest, and *Ease* comes all so fast.

CHAP. II.

Upon the Thriftiness of the Husbandman.

The hardest lab'rers are the thriving men,
If you'll have thriving souls, be active then.

OBSERVATION.

INDUSTRY and diligence is the way to thrive and grow rich in the world. The earth must be manured, or its increase is in vain expected; *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam;* He that refuses the mill, refuses the meal, (saith the proverb). "The diligent soul "shall be made fat." Solomon hath two proverbs concerning thriftiness and increase in the world. In Prov. x. 4. he saith, "The "hand of the diligent maketh rich." And in ver. 22. he saith, "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich." These are not *contradictory*, but *confirmatory* each of other; one speaks of the *principal*, the other of the *instrumental* cause. Diligence without God's blessing will not do it; and that blessing cannot be expected without diligence; therefore husbandmen ply their business with unwearied pains, they do even lodge in the midst of their labours as that good husband Boaz did, Ruth ii. 3. They are *parsimonious* of their time, but *prodigal* of their sweet and strength, because they find this to be the thriving way.

APPLICATION.

As nature opens her treasures to none but the diligent, so neither doth grace. He that will be a rich, must be a painful Christian; and whosoever will closely ply the trade of godliness, shall comfortably and quickly find, "That in keeping God's commands there is great "reward," Psal. xix. 11. God is a "bountiful rewarder of such as "diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. They must not indeed work for wages, * nor yet will God suffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it sufficiently rewards itself, 1 Tim. vi. 6. And its reward is twofold; (1.) Present and in part; (2.) Future, and in full. Mark x. 29, 30. Now in this time an hundred-fold, even from suffering, which seems the most unprofitable part of the work, and in the world to come life everlasting. If you ask what present advantage Christians have by their diligence? I answer, as much and more than the husbandman hath from all his toils and labours. Let us compare the particulars, and see what the husbandman gets that the Christian gets not also. Compare your gains, and you will quickly see the odds.

1. You get credit and reputation by your diligence; it is a commendation and honour to you to be active and stirring men: But how much more honour doth God put upon his laborious servants?

* *Non mercenarii sed operarii.*

It is the highest honour of a creature to be active and useful for its God. Saints are called *vessels of honour*, as they are fitted for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21. Wherein consists the honour of angels but in this, that they are ministering spirits, serviceable creatures? And all the apostles glorified in the title of servants. The lowest office in which a man can serve God, even that of Nethinim, or door-keepers, which was the lowest order or rank of officers in the house of God, Ezek. xliv. 10, 11. is yet preferred by David before the service of the greatest prince on earth, Psalm lxxxiv. 10. It is no small honour to be active for God.

2. You have this benefit by your labour, that thereby you avoid loose and evil company, which would draw you into mischief. By diligence for God, the Christian also is secured from temptation; "God is with them while they are with him," 2 Chron. xv. 2. Communion with God in the way of duty is a great preservative against temptations. The *schoolmen* put the question, how the *angels* and glorified saints become impeccant? And resolve it thus: That they are secured from sin by the beatifical vision; and sure I am that the visions of God, not only in glory, but now also in duty, are marvellous defences against sin; and they who are most active for God, have the fullest and clearest visions of God, John xiv. 21.

3. You have this benefit by your labour, that it tends much to the health of our bodies. The Christian hath this benefit by his labour, that it tends to a healthful state of soul; "The way of the "Lord is strength to the upright," Prov. x. 29. As those that follow their daily labours in the field, have much more health than citizens that live idly, or scholars that live a sedentary life: So the active Christian enjoys more spiritual health, and is troubled with fewer complaints than others.

4. By diligence in your civil employments, you preserve your estates, and are kept from running behind-hand in the world. Bailiffs trouble not such men's doors; they usally have the forefoot of their neighbours. And by activity and diligence for God, souls are kept from backsliding, and running back in their graces and comforts. Remissness and intermission in our duties are the first steps and degrees by which a soul declines and wastes as to his spiritual estate.

5. Your pains and diligence in the fields, make your bed sweet to you at night, Eccles. v. 12. "Rest is sweet to a labouring man, whe-"ther he eat little or much." But the diligent life of a Christian makes the clods of the valley, his grave, sweet unto him, 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before "thee," &c. Think Christian, how sweet it will be for thee when thou comest to die, to say then as thy Redeemer did, when near his death, John xvii. 4, 5. "I have finished the work which thou gavest "me to do; and now, O Father glorify me with thine own self."

6. The expence of your sweat fills your purses, you get estates by your diligence and labour; but what are your gains to the gains of

Christians? They can get in an hour that which they will not part with for all the gold and silver on earth, Prov. iii. 14.

So that compare these labourers, as to all their advantages, and you shall see, that there is no trade like that which the diligent Christian drives.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflections of the slothful soul.

1. Blush then, O my soul, at the consideration of thy laziness and sloth, which is attended with so many spiritual wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuse the painful way of duty, in which the precious fruits of godliness are only to be found? If the fruits lie upon the surface of duty, or could be had with wishes, I should not want them; but to dig deep and take pains I cannot. My desires, like those of the slothful man, kill me, because my hands refuse to labour, Prov. xxi. 25. If every duty were to be rewarded presently with gold, would I not have been more assiduous in them, than I have been? And yet I know that a heart full of the grace and comfort of the Holy Ghost, is better than a house full of gold and silver. O what a composition of stupidity and sloth am I! I have been all for the short cut to comfort, when constant experience teacheth, that the further way about, by painful duty, is the nearer way to it. What pains do husbandmen take? What peril do seamen run for a little gain; O sluggish heart! wilt thou do nothing for eternal treasures?

Secondly, If there be such great reward attending diligence in duty, then why art thou so apt, O my soul, to cast off duty, because thou findest not present comfort in it? How quickly am I discouraged, if I presently find not what I expect in duty? Whereas the well is deep, and much pains must be taken to draw up those waters of joy, Isa. xii. 3. There is a golden vein in the mount of duty, but it lies deep; and because I meet not with it as soon as I expect, my lazy heart throws by the shovel, and cries, Dig I cannot.

The worlding's reflections.

Thirdly, If this be indeed the rich and thriving trade, why do I puddle about the poor, low things of the world so much, neglecting the rich trade of godliness for it? O how much of my time and strength have these things devoured? Had I employed that time in communion with God, would it not have turned to a better account? Thinkest thou in earnest, O my soul, that God hath endowed thee with such excellent faculties, capable of the most Divine and heavenly employments, or that Jesus Christ hath shed his invaluable, precious blood, or that he hath sent forth the glorious Spirit of holiness, and all this to fit men for no higher, no nobler employments than these.

Is this the end of thy wonderful creation; Doth God whirl about the heavens in endless revolutions, to beget time for this? Or doth he not rather expect that the weightiest work should engross thy

greatest strength, and choicest hours? O that I could once consider, what a good Master Christians serve, whho will not only abundantly reward them at night, but brings them their food into the fields to encourage them in their labour! What pity is it, that so good a Master should be so badly served as he hath been by me! Hark how he pleads to gain my heart:

THE POEM,

By way of Dialogue betwixt Christ and the World.

CHRIST.

O Why so free of sweat and time,
For what ere long will not be thine?
Or if it might, thou sell'st to loss,
A precious soul for lasting dross.
Those weary hands, and toiling brains,
Might be employ'd for better gains.
Wouldst thou but work as hard for me,
As for the world which *cozens* thee;
Thy gains should be a thousand fold:
For my revenue's more than gold.

WORLD.

Soul, I have always found thee willing,
Rather by me to earn a shilling,
Than trust uncertain things which lie
Beyond thee in eternity.
Shall things unseen now tempt thee? Tush,
A bird in hand's worth two i' th' bush.
I pay thee wages down in hand,
This thou canst feel, taste, understand,
O let not such a vain pretence
Prevail against thy very sense.

CHRIST.

Thus beasts are led, thus birds are snar'd,
Thus souls for ruin are prepar'd.
What! trust no farther than you see,
You'll trust a thief as far as me.
Deluded wretch! Will nought but sight
And sense convince thee? O how right,
How just is God? whose direful scourge
Such arguments in hell shall urge.

WORLD.

Christ threatens wrath to come, but I
Do threaten thee with poverty.
And why wilt thou thyself, and those
That are so dear, to want expose!

Come see, the saints, for all their brags,
How well they thrive, they're cloth'd in rags.

CHRIST.

If my dear saints in rags do go,
'Tis not religion clothes them so;
But by such wants the Lord secures
Their souls against the killing snares:
They all are heirs, tho' under age,
Expectants of their heritage:
Kept short for present, yet contemn
A change with those that scoff at them.

WORLD.

It is vain to plead, for I
With present things charm pow'rfully;
Whate'er thou offer'st, they'll despise,
I hold them pris'ners by their eyes.

CHRIST.

If they will serve no other Lord,
Then let it stand upon record,
Against their souls, that they refus'd
My wages, and my grace abus'd.
Remember this when they shall see
All turn'd to ashes that's in thee.

ANOTHER.

NONE will deny but those are blessed pains
Which are attended with the richest gains.
Grant this, and then most clearly 'tis inferr'd,
Soul-work to all deserves to be preferr'd.
This is an unknown trade: O who can count
To what the gains of godliness amount?
For one poor shilling, O what risks some run?
Some toiling as i' th' fire, from sun to sun.
Whereas one hour spent with God brings in
Such heavenly treasures, that poor souls have been
Enrich'd for ever. Even as you see
A prince's favourite, upon the knee,
Can in an hour's time more wealth obtain,
Than all your lives by labour you can gain.
Pray'r-gains are great, and quick returns are made,
Sure then the Christian drives the richest trade.
'Tis true the hypocrite that never drove
A serious trade for heaven may bankrupt prove:
But holy souls, who mind, and closely ply
Their business, greatly are enrich'd thereby:

The diff'rence 'twixt the one, and th' other's best
By such a simile as this, exprest:
As in a summer's day you often see
The wanton butterfly, and painful bee;
On fragrant flowers fix, whence one doth strive
To bear his precious burden to the hive;
The other's pains no profit with it brings,
His time is spent in painting of his wings.
When winter comes, the bee hath full supplies,
The other creeps into an hole, and dies.
Like different events shall be betwixt
The painful saint, and lazy notionist.

CHAP. III.

Upon the cheerfulness of the Husbandman.

The plowman sings, and whistles, though he sweat,
Shall Christians droop, because their work is great;

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH the labours of the husbandman are very great and toilsome, yet with what cheerfulness do they go through them? It is very delightful to hear the melody they make, by whistling, as they follow the plow; yea, the very horses have their bells, which make a pleasant noise. *Horses* (saith Mr. Fuller) *will do more for a whistle than a whip;* and their bells do, as it were, gingle away their weariness. I have been often delighted with this country music, whereby they sweeten their hard labours with an innocent pleasure, and verify the saying of the poet:

Tempus in agrorum cultu consumere dulce est. Ovid.
Altho' they plow from morning until night,
Time steals away with pleasure and delight.

APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater cause have the people of God to address themselves unto his work with all cheerfulness of spirit? And, indeed, so far as the heart is spiritual, it delights in its duties. It is true, the work of a Christian is painful, and much more spending than the husbandman's, (as was opened, Chap. 1.) but then it as much exceeds in the delights and pleasures that attend it. What is the Christian's work, but "with joy to draw water out of the wells of "salvation?" Isa. xii. 3. You may see what a pleasant path the paths of duty is, by the cheerfulness of those that have walked in

them, Psal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy judgments, "as much as in all riches." And by the promises that are made to such, Psal. cxxxviii. 5. "Yea, they sing in the ways of the Lord, "for great is the glory of the Lord." And again, "You shall have "a song as in the night, when an holy solemnity is kept, and glad- "ness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come to the "mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel," Isa. xxx. 29.

And, lastly, by the many commands, whereby joy in the way of the Lord is made the duty of the saints. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye "righteous, for praise is comely for the upright," Psal. xcvii. 12. "Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice," Phil. iv. 4. where the command is doubled, yea, not only simple rejoicing, but the highest degree of that duty comes within the command. Psal. cxxxii. 9, 16. "Shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." And Luke vii. 22, 23. they are bid *to leap for joy*, when about the difficultest part of their work. And that you may see there is a sufficient ground for it, and that it is not like the mad mirth of sinners, be pleased to consider,

1*st*, The nature of the work about which they are employed: It is the most excellent and heavenly employment that ever souls were acquainted with. O what a ravishing and delightful thing it is to walk with God! And yet by this, the whole work of a Christian is expressed, Gen. xvii. 1. Can any life compare with this, for pleasure? Can they be chill that walk in the sun-shine? Or sad, that abide in the fountain of all delights; and walk with him whose name is the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3. "In whose presence is the "fulness of joy," Psal. xvi. 11. O what an angelical life doth a Christian then live?

Or, 2*dly*, If we consider the variety of spiritual employments, *Varietas delectat.* Change of employment takes off the tediousness of labour. Variety of voices pleases the ear, variety of colours delights the eye, the same meat prepared several ways, pleases the palate more, and clogs it less. But oh the variety of choice dishes wherewith God entertains his people in a Sabbath! as the word, prayer, sacraments, &c. Isa. lviii. 13. If thou call the Sabbath thydelights; or, as Tremellius renders it, thy delicate things. "My soul (saith David) shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness," Psal. lxiii. 5.

3*dly*, or *lastly*, If we consider the suitableness of this work to a regenerate soul. Is it any pain for a bird to fly? Or a fish to swim? Is the eye tired with beautiful objects? Or the ear with melodious sounds? As little can a spiritual soul be wearied with spiritual and heavenly exercises. Rom. vii. 22 "I delight in the law of God after "the inner man." *Gravia non gravitant in corum loco*, (saith the philosopher) weighty things are not heavy in their own element, or centre. And surely God is the centre of all gracious spirits. A saint can sit from morning to night to hear discourses of the love and

loveliness of Jesus Christ. The sight of your thriving flocks and flourishing fields, cannot yield you that pleasure which an upright soul can find in one quarter of an hour's communion with God. "They that are after the flesh, (saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 5.) do "mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the "things of the Spirit." But then look how much heavenly objects transcend earthly ones, and how much the soul is more capable of delight in those objects, than the gross and duller senses are in theirs; so much doth the pleasure arising from duty excel all sensitive delights on earth.

REFLECTIONS.

The carnal heart's reflection.

How am I cast and condemned by this, may I say, who never savoured this spiritual delight in holy duties! When I am about my earthly employments, I can go on unweariedly from day to day; all the way is down-hill to my nature, and the wheels of my affections being oiled with carnal delight, run so fast, that they have need most times of trigging. Here I rather need the curb than the spur. O how fleet and nimble are my spirits in these their pursuits! but O what a slug am I in religious duties! sure if my heart were renewed by grace, I should delight in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. All the world is alive in their ways, every creature enjoys his proper pleasure; and is there no delight to be found in the paths of holiness? Is godliness only a dry root that bears no pleasant fruits? No, there are doubtless incomparable pleasures to be found therein; but such a carnal heart as mine savours them not.

The hypocrite's reflection.

I cannot say but I have found delight in religious duties, but they have been only such as rather sprang from the ostentation of gifts and applauses of men than any sweet and real communion I have had with God through them; they have rather proved food and fuel to my pride, than food to my soul. Like the nightingale, I can sing sweetly, when I observe others to listen to me, and be affected with my music. O false, deceitful heart, such delight as this will end in howling! were my spirit right, it would as much delight in retirements for the enjoyment of God, as it doth in those duties that are most exposed to the observation of man. Will such a spring as this maintain a stream of affections when carnal motives fail? What wilt thou answer, O my soul! to that question? Job xxvii. 9, 10. "Will God "hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" What wilt thou reply to this question? Deceive not thou thyself, O my soul! thou wilt doubtless be easily persuaded to let go that thou never delightedst in, and, from an hypocrite in religion, quickly become an apostate from religion.

The upright heart's reflection.

From all this the upright heart takes advantage to rouse up its delight in God, and thus it expostulateth with itself: Doth the plowman sing amidst his drudging labours, and whistle away his weariness in the fields; and shall I droop amidst such heavenly employment? O my soul, what wantest thou here, to provoke thy delight? If there be such an affection as delight in thee, methinks such an object as the blessed face of God in ordinances should excite it. Ah! how would this ennoble all my services, and make them angel-like! how glad are those blessed creatures to be employed for God! No sooner were they created, but they sang together, and shouted for joy, Job xxxviii. 7. How did they fill the air with heavenly melody, when sent to bring the joyful tidings of a Saviour to the world! Ascribing glory to God in the highest, even to the highest of their powers. Yea, this delight would make all my duties Christ-like; and the nearer that pattern, the more excellent: he delighted to do his Father's will, it was to him meat and drink, Psalm xl. 7. John iv. 32, 34.

Yea, it would not only ennoble, but facilitate all my duties, and be to me as wings to a bird in flying, or sails to a ship in motion. *Non tardat uncta rota;* oiled wheels run freely: "Or ever I was aware "my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." O what is the reason (my God) my delight in thee should be so little? Is it not because my unbelief is so great? Rouse up my delights, O thou fountain of pleasure! and let me swim down the stream of holy joy in duty, into the boundless ocean of those immense delights that are in thy presence, and at thy right hand for evermore.

THE POEM.

O What a dull, desponding heart is mine!
That takes no more delight in things divine.
When all the creatures, both in heav'n and earth,
Enjoy their pleasures, and are big with mirth.
Angels and saints that are before the throne,
In ecstasies and raptures every one
Perpetually is held; each blessed spirit
The purest, highest joys doth there inherit:
The saints on earth, in their imperfect state,
Those peerless joys, by faith do antedate.
To nat'ral men, who savour not this pleasure,
Yet bounteous nature doth unlock her treasure
Of sensitive delights; yea, strange to tell,
Bold sinners rant it all the way to hell.
Like fish that play in Jordan's silver stream,
So these in sensual lusts, and never dream
Of that dread sea to which the stream doth tend,
And to their pleasures puts a fatal end.

Yea, birds and beasts, as well as men, enjoy
Their innocent delights: these chirp and play;
The cheerful birds among the branches sing,
And make the neighb'ring groves with music ring:
With various warbling notes they all invite
Our ravish'd ears with pleasure and delight.
The new-fall'n lambs, will in a sun-shine day,
About their feeding dams jump up and play.
Are cisterns sweet? and is the fountain bitter?
Or can the sun be dark when glow-worms glitter?
Have instruments their sweet, melodious airs?
All creatures their delights; and saints not theirs?
Yea, theirs transcend these sensual ones as far
As noon-day Phœbus doth a twinkling star.
Why droop I then, may any creature have
A life like mine for pleasure? Who e'er gave
The like encouragement that Christ hath given,
To do his will on earth, as 'tis in heaven?

CHAP. IV.

Upon the due Quality of Arable Land.

Corn land must neither be too fat, nor poor;
The middle state suits best with Christians, sure.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN find, by experience, that their arable lands may be dressed too much, as well as too little; if the soil be over-rank, the seed shoots up so much into the stalk, that it seldom ears well; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due nutriment, and comes not to perfection. Therefore their care is, to keep it in heart, but not to over-dress, or under-dress it. The end of all their cost and pains about it is fruit; and therefore reason tells them, that such a state and temperament of it, as best fits it for fruit, is best both for it and them.

APPLICATION.

AND doth not spiritual experience, teach Christians that a mediocrity and competency of the things of this life, best fit them for the fruits of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their being? A man may be over-mercied, as well as over-afflicted; *Raro fumant fœlicibus aræ*, the altars of the rich seldom smoke. When our outward enjoyments are by providence shaped, and fitted to our con-

dition, as a suit is to the body that sits close and neat, neither too short, nor too long; we cannot desire a better condition in this world. This was it that wise Agur requested of God, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food conve-" nient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say who is the "Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God "in vain." Against both he prays *equally*, not *absolutely;* that had been his sin; but, comparatively, and submissively to the will of God. He had rather, if God see it fit to avoid both of these extremes; but what would he have then? Why, food convenient. Or according to the Hebrew, give me my prey or statute-bread; which is a metaphor from birds which fly up and down to prey for their young, and what they get they distribute among them; they bring them enough to preserve their lives, but not more than enough to lie mouldering in the nest. Such a proportion Agur desired, and the reason why he desired it is drawn from the danger of both extremes. He measured like a wise Christian, the convenience or inconvenience of his estate in the world, by its suitableness or unsuitableness to the end of his being, which is the service of his God. He accounted the true excellence of his life to consist in its reference and tendency to the glory of his God; and he could not see how a *redundancy*, or too great a *penury* of earthly comforts could fit him for that; but a middle estate, equally removed from both extremes, best fitted that end. And this was all that good Jacob, who was led by the same Spirit, looked at, Gen. xxviii. 20. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "if God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and "give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again "to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God." Poor Jacob, he desires no great matters in the world, food and raiment will satisfy him; in spiritual matters his desires are boundless, he is the most greedy and unsatisfied man in the world, Hos. xii. 4. but in the matters of this life, if he can get from God but *offam et aquam*, a morsel of meat and a mouthful of water, he will not envy the richest Crœsus, or Crassus upon earth. *Cibus et potus sunt divitæ Christianorum;* meat and drink are the riches of Christians. *Divitiæ sunt ad legem naturæ composita paupertas*, saith Pomponius Atticus; riches are such a poverty, or mediocrity, as hath enough for nature's uses; and such a state is best accommodated both to the condition, and to the desires of a saint.

1. To his condition, for what is a saint but a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, a man in a strange country travelling homeward? So David professed himself, Psalm cxix. 12. "I am a stranger in this "earth." And so those worthies, who are now at home in heaven, Heb. xi. 13. they professed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to seek a country; a *viaticum* contents a traveller, he will not incumber himself with superfluous things, which would rather clog and tire, than expedite and help him in his journey.

2. It suits best with his desires, I mean his regular and advised desires. For.

1. A gracious soul earnestly desires a free condition in the world; he is sensible he hath much work to do, a race to run, and is loth to be clogged, or have his foot in the snare of the cares or pleasures of this life. He knows that fulness exposes to wantonness and irreligion, Deut. vi. 12. Hos. xiii. 6. It is hard, in the midst of so many tempting objects, to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon the affections. The heart of a Christian, like the moon, commonly suffers an eclipse when it is at the full, and that by the interposition of the earth.

It was Solomon's fulness that drew out and dissolved his spirits, and brought him to such a low ebb in spirituals, that it remains a question with some, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying day. As it is the misery of the poor to be neglected of men, so it is the misery of the rich to neglect God. Who can be poorer than to have the world and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

And on the other side, extreme poverty is no less exposed to sin and danger, Lev. vi. 2, 3, 4. As high and lofty trees are subject to storms and tempests, so the lower shrubs to be browsed on by every beast; and therefore a saint desires a just competency as the *fittest*, because the *freest* state.

2. A gracious person desires no more but a competency, because there is most of God's love and care discovered in giving in our daily bread, by a daily providence. It is betwixt such a condition, and a fulness of creature-provisions in our land, as it was betwixt Egypt and Canaan; Egypt was watered with the flood from the river Nilus, and little of God was seen in that mercy; but Canaan depended upon the dews and showers of heaven? and so every shower of rain was a refreshing shower to their souls, as well as bodies. Most men that have a stock of creature-comforts in their hands, look upon all as coming in an ordinary, natural course, and see very little of God in their mercies. Pope Adrian built a college at Louvain, and caused this inscription to be written in letters of gold on the gates thereof; *Trajectum plantavit, Louvanium rigavit, Cæsar dedit incrementum; (i. e.)* Utrecht planted me, Louvain watered me, and Cæsar gave the increase. One to reprove his folly wrote underneath, *Hic Deus nihil fecit;* here God did nothing. Carnal men sow, and reap, and eat, and look no further.

But now, when a man sees his mercies come in by the special and assiduous care of God for him, there is a double sweetness in those mercies; the natural sweetness which comes from the creature itself, every one, even the beasts, can taste that as well as thee; but besides that, there is a spiritual sweetness, far exceeding the former, which none but a believer tastes; and much of that comes from the manner

in which he receives it, because it comes (be it never so coarse or little) as a covenant mercy to him. "He hath given bread to them "that fear him, he is ever mindful of his covenant," Psal. cxi. 5. Luther, who made many a meal upon a broiled herring, was wont to say, *Mendicato pane hic vivamus, annon hoc pulchre sarcitur in eo, quod pascimur pane cum angelis et vita æterna, Christo et sacramentic:* Let us be content with coarse fare here, have we not the bread that came down from heaven? Do we not feed with angels? A pregnant instance of the sweetness of such mercies is given us by a worthy divine of our own, Mr. Isaac Ambrose, '* For my own part (saith 'he) however the Lord hath seen cause to give me but a poor pit-'tance of outward things, for which I bless his name, yet in the 'income thereof, I have many times observed so much of his peculiar 'providence, that thereby they have been very much sweetened, and 'my heart hath been raised to admire his grace. When of late under 'an hard dispensation (which I judge not meet to mention, wherein 'I suffered with inward peace conscientiously) all streams of wonted 'supplies being stopt, the waters of relief for myself and family did 'run low. I went to bed with some staggerings and doubtings of 'the fountain's letting out itself for our refreshing; but ere I did 'awake in the morning, a letter was brought to my bed-side, which 'was signed by a choice friend, Mr. Anthony Ash, which reported 'some unexpected breakings out of God's goodness for my comfort. 'These are some of his lines,——Your God, who hath given you 'an heart thankfully to record your experiences of his goodness, doth 'renew experiences for your encouragement. Now I shall report 'one which will raise your spirit towards the God of your mercy, &c.' Whereupon he sweetly concludes, 'One morsel of God's provision, '(especially if it come unexpected, and upon prayer, when wants are "most) will be more sweet to a spiritual relish, than all former full 'enjoyments were.

Many mercies come unasked for, and they require thankfulness, but when mercies come in upon prayer, and as a return of prayer, their sweetness more than doubles; for now it is both God's blessing upon his own institution, and a seal set to his promise at once, Psal. lxvi. 16, 17. Doubtless Hannah found more comfort in her Samuel, and Leah in her Naphtali, the one being asked of God, and the other wrestled for with God, (as their names import) than mothers ordinarily do in their children.

REFLECTIONS.

The reflection of the designing hypocrite.

Do the people of God desire only so much of the creature as may fit them for the service of God? What wretch am I that have desired only so much of religion as may fit me to gain the creature! As

* Epistle to the Earl of Bedford; *ante ultima.*

God's people have subjected all their creature-enjoyments to religion, so appositely, O my soul, thou hast subected religion to thy worldly interest and designs. Instead of eating and drinking to serve God, I have served God that I might eat and drink; yea, I have not only acted below religion, but below reason also; for reason dictates plainly, that the means must never be more excellent than the end. Wretch that I am, to make religion a slave to my lust, a stirrup to advancement, an artifice to carry on my carnal designs; verily I have my reward; and this is all the good I am ever like to get by it.

The worldling's reflection.

And no less should the worldling tremble, to consider how he hath cast off the duties of religion, made them stand aside, and give place to the world. Instead of desiring so much only as might make him serviceable to God, he thrusts aside the service of God to get as much of the world as he can, who is so far from making godliness the end of his creature-comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an obstacle and hindrance to them. May not the very heathens make me blush? Could Aristotle deliver this as a true rule to posterity, to make religion our first, and chief care? Could Aristippus say, He would rather neglect his means than his mind! his farm than his soul? Will the very Mahometans, how urgent soever their business be, lay it all aside five times in the day to pray? Yea, it is common to a proverb among the very Papists, that mass and meat hinder no man; and yet I, that profess myself a Christian, thrust out duty for every trifle! O wretched soul! how hath the god of this world blinded mine eyes? Can the world indeed do that for me that Christ can do: Hath it ever proved true to them that trusted it, and doated on it? Hath it not at last turned them off, as men turn off a sumpter-horse at night, that hath been a drudge to carry their gold and silver for them all day, and at last is turned out with an empty belly, and a galled back? O how righteous will that sentence of God be! Go cry to the gods whom thou hast served.

The gracious soul's reflection.

And may not many gracious hearts turn in upon themselves with shame and sorrow, to consider how unsatisfied they have been in that condition, that others have preferred and esteemed as the greatest of all outward mercies? I have indeed been fed with food convenient, but not contented? how hath mine heart been tortured from day to day with anxious thoughts, what I shall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine shall be clothed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a competency of the world, but sure I am, my cares about it have been incompetent. Come my distrustful, earthly heart, let me propound a few questions to thee about this matter, and answer truly to what I shall demand of thee.

Quest. 1. Hast thou here a continuing city? Art thou at home, or upon thy journey, that thou art so solicitous about the world? Thy profession indeed speaks thee a stranger upon earth, but thy conver-

sation a home-dweller. Erasmus said he desired honours and riches no more than a weary horse doth a heavy cloak-back. Wouldst thou not account him a fool that would victual his ship as much to cross the channel to France, as if she were bound for the East Indies? Alas! it will be but a little while, and then there will be no more need of any of these things. It is sad, that a soul which stands at the door of eternity, should be perplexing itself about food and raiment.

Quest. 2. Which of all the saints hast thou known to be the better for much of the world? It hath been some men's utter ruin. Seldom doth God suffer men to be their own carvers, but they cut their own fingers. 'To give riches and pleasure to an evil man (saith Aristotle) 'is but to give wine to one that hath a fever.' Where there is no *want*, there is usually much *wantonness*. What a sad story is that of Pius Quintus. When I was in a low condition, said he, I had some comfortable hopes of my salvation; but when I came to be a cardinal, I greatly doubted of it: But Since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Though this poor, undone wretch, spake it out, and others keep it in; yet, doubtless, he hath many thousand fellows in the world that might say as much, would they but speak the truth.

And even God's own people, though the world hath not excluded them out of heaven, yet it hath sorely clogged them in the way thither. Many that have been very humble, holy, and heavenly in a low condition, have suffered a sad ebb in a full condition. What a cold blast have they felt coming from the cares and delights of this life, to chill both their graces, and comforts! It had been well for some of God's people, if they had never known what prosperity meant.

Quest. 3. Is not this a sad symptom of a declining state of soul, to be so hot, eager, and anxious about the superfluous trifles of this life? Thinkest thou, O my soul? that one who walks in the views of that glory above, and maintains a conversation in heaven, can be much taken with these vanities? Do not the visions of God veil the tempting splendour of the creature! It was the opinion of some of the Schoolmen, that the reason why Adam in paradise was not sensible of his nakedness, was because he was wholly taken up in conversing with God. But this is certain, lively and sweet communion with God, blunts and dulls the edge of the affections to earthly things; and canst thou be satisfied, my soul, with such gains as are attended with such spiritual losses?

Quest. 4. To conclude, is it not dishonourable to God, and a justification of the way of the world for me, that profess myself a Christian, to be as eager after riches as other men; "After all these things "do the nations seek," Matth. vi. 32. If I had no Father in heaven, nor promise in the world, it were another matter: but since my heavenly Father knows what I have need of, and hath charged me to be careful in nothing, but only to tell him my wants, Phil. iv. 6. how

unbecoming a thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to measure and estimate my condition, rather by its usefulness to God, than its content and ease to my flesh.

THE POEM.

IF fruit and service be indeed the end
To which my being and redemption tend,
Reason concludes that state of all the rest,
Which is most serviceable, to be best.
And such a state experience shews to lie
'Twixt fulness and a pinching poverty.
This golden *mean* is worth a golden *mine*;
He that hath this should be asham'd to whine.
The full-fed Christian, like the ox i' th' stall.
Is no way fit to-work, or plow withal.
And penury, like Pharaoh's leaner kine,
Devours the fattest portions of our time.
That man with whom this earthly pleasure's found,
Or in whose heart those anxious cares abound;
And yet can walk by scripture-rule, and line,
Will need a better head and heart than mine;
A single staff the traveller may find,
Of use and service; but if you should bind
A bundle of them to his back, they'll make
Him slack his pace and cry, my shoulders ach.
I am a traveller, this world's my way,
A single staff may be of use to stay
My feeble body, if it do not crack
By too hard leaning on it; but my back
Will bear no more: Alas! I soon shall tire,
And more than one I cannot well desire.
Lord, to prescribe to thee becomes me not,
I rather do submit unto my lot.
But yet let condescending grace admit
Thy servant's suit this once, and this is it:
The staff of bread convenient let me have,
And manage it discreetly; so, 'twill save
Thy feeble servant from the mire and dirt,
But more or less than this may do me hurt.
Or if thou say, thy servant shall have none,
Then strengthen faith, that I may go alone.

CHAP. V.

Upon the Improvement of bad Ground.

Spent barren land you can restore, and nourish;
Decayed Christians God can cause to flourish.

OBSERVATION.

WHERE land is spent out by tillage for want of manuring, the careful husbandman hath many ways to recover and bring it in heart again. He lets it lie fallow, to give it rest, and time to recover itself: carries out to his sand, lime, and compost, to refresh and quicken it again; and in pasture and meadow ground, will wash it, (if possible) with a current of water, or the float of the ways after a fall of rain, which is to the earth as a spring of new blood to a consumptive body. He cuts down and kills the weeds that suck it out, and causes them to make restitution of what they have purloined from it, by rotting upon the place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it, when it is spent, as an honest physician is of his patient in a languishing condition; for he knows his field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his care and cost.

APPLICATION.

AS man's, so God's husbandry is sometimes out of case, not by yielding too many crops, but too few. The mystical husbandman hath some fields, (I mean particular societies and persons, who were once fragant and fruitful like a field) which God had blessed, but are now decayed and grown barren; whose gleanings formerly were more than their vintage now; the things that are in them are ready to die, Rev. iii. 3. It is possible, yea, too common for gracious souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts; how low I will not say. Our British divines tell us, that grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost; but there may be an omission of the act, though not an omission of the habit: The act may be perverted, though the faith cannot be subverted; it may be shaken in, though not shaken out: Its fruits may fall, but its sap lies hid in the root. They demerit the loss of the kingdom, but lose it not effectively; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved *.

Certain it is, one that, like Paul, hath been wrapped up with joy, even to the third heavens, and cried, "I am more than a conqueror,

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* *Gratia nec totaliter intermittitur nec finaliter amittitur. Actus omittitur, habitus non amittitur. Actio pervertitur, fides non subvertitur. Concutitur, non executitor. Defluit fructus, latet succus. Jus ad regnum amittunt demeritorie, non effective. Effectus justificationis suspenditur, at status justificati non dissolvitur.*

" who shall separate me from the love of Christ?" may, at another time lie mourning, as at the gates of death, crying, " O wretched " man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this " death?" One that hath walked in sweet communion with God, sunning himself in the light of his countenance, may afterwards " walk in darkness, and see no light," Isa. l. 10. He that hath cast anchor within the veil, and rode securely in the peaceful harbour of assurance, may seem to feel his anchor of hope come home to him, and go a-drift into the stormy ocean again, crying with the church, Lam. iii. 18. " My hope is perished from the Lord." His calm and clear air may be overcast and clouded, yea, filled with storms and tempests, lightnings and thunders; his graces, like under-ground flowers in the winter, may all disappear, and hide their beautiful heads.

To God he may say, I am cast out of thy sight. I know thou canst do much, but wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?

To the promises he may say, you are sweet things indeed, but what have I to do with you? I could once, indeed, rejoice in you, as my portion; but now I doubt I grasped a shadow, a fancy instead of you.

To saints he may say, turn away from me, labour not to comfort me, O do not spill your precious ointment of consolation upon my head; for what have I to do with comfort? To former *experiences*, he may say in his haste, you are all liars. To the *light of God's countenance* he may say, farewell sweet light, I shall behold thee no more. To Satan he may say, O mine enemy, thou hast at last prevailed against me, thou art stronger than I, and hast overcome. To *duties* and *ordinances*, he may say, Where is the sweetness I once found in you? You were once sweeter to me than the honey-comb; but now as tasteless as the white of an egg. O sad relapse! deplorable change! *quantum mutatus ab illo?*

But will God leave his poor creatures helpless, in such a case as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their joy, their life, their hearts depart? Will he see their graces fainting, their hopes grasping, the new creature panting, the things that are in them ready to die, and will he not regard it? Yes; " there is hope of a " tree if it be cut down, and the root thereof wax old in the earth, " yet by the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a " plant," Job xiv. 8, 9. This poor declined soul, as sad as it sits at the gates of hell, may rouse up itself at last, and say to Satan, that stands triumphing over him, " Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, " for though I fall, yet I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the " Lord shall be a light unto me," Micah vii. 8. He may raise up himself upon the bed of languishing for all this, and say to God, " Though thou hast chastened me sore, yet hast thou not given me " over unto death." He may turn about to the saints that have mourned for him, and with a lightsome countenance say, " I shall

" not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." He may say to the *promises*, You are the true and faithful sayings of God. My unbelief did bely you; I said in my haste you were liars, but I eat my words, I am ashamed of my folly. Surely, O soul, there is yet hope in thine end, thou mayest be restored, Psal. xxiii. 3. Thou mayest yet recover thy verdure, and thy dew be as the dew of herbs. For,

1. Is he not thy father, and a father full of compassions, and bowels? And can a father stand by his dying-child, see his fainting fits, hear his melting groans, and pity-begging looks, and not help him, especially having restoratives by him, that can do it? Surely, " As a father pities his own children, so will thy God pity thee," " Psal. ciii. 12, 13. " He will spare thee as a father spareth his " own son that serves him," Mal. iii. 17. Hark, how his bowels yearn! " I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. Is not " Ephraim my dear son? Is he not a pleasant child? For since I " spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, I will surely " have mercy on him," Jer. xxxi. 20.

2. Doth he not know thy life would be altogether useless to him, if he should not restore thee? What service art thou fit to perform to him, in such a condition? " Thy days will consume like smoke, " whilst thy heart is smitten and withered like grass," Psal. cii. 3, 4. Thy months will be months of vanity, they will fly away, and see no good, Job vii. 3. If he will but quicken thee again, then thou mayest call upon his name, Psal. lxxx. 18. but in a dead and languishing condition thou art no more fit for any work of God, than a sick man is for manual labours; and surely he hath not put those precious and excellent graces of the Spirit within thee for nothing; they were planted there for fruit and service, and therefore, doubtless, he will revive thee again.

3. Yea, doth thou not think he sees thine inability to bear such a condition long? He knows " thy spirit would fail before him, and the soul which he hath made;" Isa. lvii. 16. David told him as much in the like condition, Psal. cxliii. 7, 8. " Hear me speedily, " O Lord, for my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I " be like unto those that go down into the pit:" q. d. Lord, make haste, and recover my languishing soul; otherwise, whereas thou hast now a *sick child*, thou wilt shortly have a *dead child*.

And in like manner Job expostulated with him, Job vi. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12. " My grief is heavier than the sand of the sea, my words are " swallowed up, for the arrows of the Almighty are within me; and " the poison thereof drinks up my spirits: The terrors of God do " set themselves in array against me. What is my strength that I " should hope? Is my strength the strength of stones? or are my " bones of brass?" So chap. vii. 12. " Am I a sea, or a whale?" &c. Other troubles a man may, but this he cannot bear, Prov. xviii. 14. and therefore, doubtless, seasonable and gracious revivings will come,

" He will not stir up all his wrath, for he remembers thou art but " flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again," Psal. lxxvii. 38, 39. He hath ways enough to do it; if he do but unveil his blessed face, and make it shine again upon thee, thou art saved, Psal. lxxx. 3. The manifestations of his love, will be to thy soul, as showers to the parched grass; thy soul, that now droops, and hangs the wing, shall then revive and leap for joy, Isa. lxi. 1. a new face shall come upon thy graces, they shall bud again, and blosso ' as a rose. If he do but send a spring of * auxiliary grace into thy soul, to actuate the dull habits of inherent grace, the work is done; then shalt thou return to thy first works, Rev. ii. 4, 5. and sing, as in the days of thy youth.

REFLECTIONS.

O this is my very case, saith many a poor Christian; thus my soul languishes and droops from day to day. It is good news indeed, that God both can and will restore my soul; but sad that I should fall into such a state; how unlike am I to what I once was! Surely, as the old men wept when they saw how short the second *temple* came of the glory of the first; so may I sit down and weep bitterly, to consider how much my first love and first duties excelled the present. For,

1. Is my heart so much in heaven now, as it was wont to be? Say, O my soul! Dost thou not remember, when, like the beloved disciple, thou laidst in Jesus's bosom, how didst thou sweeten communion with him? How restless and impatient wast thou in his absense! divine withdrawments were to thee as the hell of hell; what a burden was the world to me in those days! Had it not been for conscience of my duty, I could have been willing to let all lie, that communion with Christ might suffer no interruption. When I awaked in the night, how was the darkness enlightened by the heavenly glimpses of the countenance of my God upon me? How did his company shorten those hours, and beguile the tediousness of the night? O my soul, speak thy experience; Is it now as it was then? No, those days are past and gone, and thou art become much a stranger to that heavenly life. Art thou able with truth to deny this charge? When occasionally I pass by those places, which were once to me as Jacob's Bethel to him; I sigh at the remembrance of former passages betwixt me and heaven there, and say with Job, chap. xxix. " O that it were with me " as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his " candle shined upon my head, when by his light I walked through " darkness, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on " righteousness, and it clothed me, when my glory was fresh in me!

A convictive reflection.

* Grace needs more grace to put it in exercise.

"When I remember these things my soul is poured out within me."

2. Is thy obedience to the commands of Christ and motions to duty, as free and cheerful as they were wont to be? Call to mind, my soul, the times when thou wast borne down the stream of love to every duty. If the Spirit did but whisper to thee, saying, *Seek my face*, how did my spirit echo to his calls? saying, "Thy face, Lord, "will I seek," Psal. xxvii. 8. If God had any work to be done, how readily did I offer my service? Here am I, Lord, send me. My soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib; love oiled the wheels of my affections, and "his commandments were not grievous," 1 John v. 3. *Non tardat uncta rota.* There were no such quarrelings with the command, no such excuses and delays as there are now. No, such was my love to Christ, and delight to do his will, that I could no more keep back myself from duty, than a man that is carried away in a crowd.

Or, lastly, tell me, O my soul, dost thou bemoan thyself, or grieve so tenderly for sin, and for grieving the Holy Spirit of God as thou wast wont to do? When formerly I had fallen by the hand of a temptation, how was I wont to lie in tears at the Lord's feet, bemoaning myself? How did I hasten to my closet, and there cry, like Ezra, chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to look "up unto thee." How did I sigh and weep before him, and, like Ephraim, smite upon my thigh, saying, "What have I done?" Ah my soul! how didst thou work, strive, and cast about how to recover thyself again? Hast thou forgotten how thou wouldst sometimes look up and sigh bitterly? Ah! what a God have I provoked? what love and goodness have I abused? Sometimes look in, and weep, Ah! what motions did I withstand? what a good Spirit have I grieved? Ah! my soul, thou wouldest have abhorred thyself, thou couldest never have borne it, had thine heart been as stupid, and as relentless then as now; if ever a poor soul had reason to dissolve itself into tears for its sad relapses, I have.

A supporting reflection.

2. But yet mourn not, O my soul, as one without hope. Remember, "There is hope in Israel concerning this "thing," As low as thy condition is, it is not desperate, it is not a disease that scorns a remedy; many a man that hath been stretched out for dead, hath revived again, and lived many a comfortable day in the world; many a tree that hath cast both leaf and fruit, by the skill of a prudent husbandman, hath recovered again, and been made both flourishing and fruitful. Is it not easier, thinkest thou, to recover a languishing man to health, than a dead man to life? And yet this God did for me, Eph. ii. 1. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? "Though my "soul draw nigh to the pit, and my life to the destroyers, yet he "can send me a messenger, one among a thousand, that shall declare "to me my uprightness; then shall he deliver me from going down "into the pit, my flesh shall be fresher than a child's, and I shall re-

"turn to the days of my youth," Job xxxiii. 22. Though my flourish, and much of my fruit too be gone, and I am a withering tree; yet as long as the root of the matter is in me, there is more hope of such a poor, decayed, withered tree, than of the hypocrite that wants such a root in all his glory and bravery. His sun shall set, and never rise again; but I live in expectation of a sweet morning after this dark night.

Rouse up, therefore, O my soul, set thy soul a work on Christ for quickening grace, for he hath life in himself, and quickens whomsoever he will, John vii. 38. Stir up that little which remains, Rev. iii. 2. hast thou not seen lively flames proceed from glimmering and dying sparks, when carefully collected and blown up? Get amongst the most lively and quickening Christians; "as iron sharp-"ens iron, so will these set an edge upon thy dull affections," Prov. xxvii. 17. Acts xviii. 15. But, above all, cry mightily to the Lord for quickening; he will not despise thy cry. The moans of a distressed child work upon the bowels of a tender father. And be sure to keep within thy view the great things of eternity, which are ready to be revealed; live in the believing and serious contemplations of them, and be dead if thou canst. It is true, thou hast reason enough from thy condition, to be for ever humbled, but no reason at all from thy God to be in the least discouraged.

THE POEM.

THOU art the Husbandman, and I
A worthless plot of husbandry,
Whom special love did, ne'ertheless,
Divide from nature's wilderness.
Then did the sun-shine of thy face,
And sweet illapses of thy grace,
Like April show'rs, and warming gleams,
Distil its dews, reflect its beams.
My dead affections then were green,
And hopeful buds on them were seen;
These into duties soon were turn'd,
In which my heart within me burn'd.
O halcyon days! thrice happy state!
Each place was Bethel, heaven's gate.
What sweet discourse, what heav'nly talk,
Whilst with thee I did daily walk!
Mine eyes o'erflow, my heart doth sink,
As oft as on those days I think.
For strangeness now is got between
My God and me, as may be seen
By what is now, and what was then:
'Tis just as if I were two men.

My fragrant branches blasted be,
No fruits like those that I can see.
Some canker-worm lies at my root,
Which fades my leaves, destroys my fruit.
My soul is banish'd from thy sight,
For this it mourneth day and night.
Yet why dost thou desponding lie?
With Jonah cast a backward eye.
Sure in thy God help may be had,
There's precious balm in Gilead.
That God that made me spring at first,
When I was barren and accurst,
Can much more easily restore
My soul to what it was before;
'Twas Heman's, Job's, and David's case,
Yet all recovered were by grace.
A word, a smile on my poor soul,
Will make it perfect, sound, and whole.
A glance of thine hath soon dissolv'd
A soul in sin and grief involv'd.
Lord, if thou canst not work the cure,
I am contented to endure.

CHAP. VI.

Upon the incurableness of some bad Ground.

No skill can mend the miry ground; and sure
Some souls the gospel leaves as past a cure.

OBSERVATION.

ALTHOUGH the industry and skill of the husbandman can make some ground that was useless and bad, good for tillage and pasture, and improve that which was barren; and by his cost and pains make one acre worth ten: yet such is the nature of some rocky or miry ground, where the water stands, and there is no way to cleanse it, that it can never be made fruitful. The husbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable piece of waste or worthless ground; and though the sun and clouds shed their influences on it, as well as upon better land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more showers it receives, the worse it proves. For these do no way fecundate or improve it; nothing thrives there but worthless flags and rushes.

APPLICATION.

MANY also, there are, under the gospel, who are given over by God to judicial blindness, hardness of heart, a reprobate sense, and perpetual barrenness; so that how excellent soever the means are which they enjoy, and how efficacious soever to the conversion, edification, and salvation of others; yet they shall never do their souls good. Ezek. xlvii. 9, 11. "Every thing wheresoever the river "comes shall live, but the miry places thereof, and the marshes "thereof shall never be healed, but be given to salt;" i. e. given to an obstinate and everlasting barrenness. Compare Deut. ix. 23. By these waters, saith the judicious Mr. Strong *, understand the doctrine of the gospel; as Rev. xxi. 2. a river of water of life, clear as crystal: *Hic fluvius est uberrima doctrina Christi*, saith Mr. Brightman. This river is the most fruitful doctrine of Christ: yet these waters do not heal the miry, marshy places; i. e. men that live unfruitfully under ordinances, who are compared to miry, marshy places, in three respects:

(1.) In miry places the water hath not free passage, but stands and settles there. So it is with these barren souls; therefore the apostle prays, that the gospel may run, and be glorified, 2 Thes. iii. 1. The word is said to run, when it meets with no stop, *Cum libere propagatur*, when it is freely propagated, and runs through the whole man; when it meets with no stop, either in the mouth of the speaker, or hearts of the hearers, as it doth in these.

(2.) In a miry place the earth and water are mixed together; this mixture makes mire. So when the truths of God do mix with the corruptions of men, that they either hold some truths, and yet live in their lusts; or else when men do make use of the truths of God to justify and plead for their sins. Or,

(3.) When, as in a miry place, the longer the water stands in it, the worse it grows; so the longer men abide under ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow. These are the miry places that cannot be healed, their disease is incurable, desperate.

O this is a sad case! and yet very common; many persons are thus given over as incorrigible, and hopeless; Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him "that is filthy be filthy still." Jer. vi. 29. "Reprobate silver shall "men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them." Isa. vi. 10, 11. "Go make the heart of this people fat, their ears dull," &c.

Christ executes, by the gospel, that curse upon many souls, which he denounced against the fig-tree, Mat. xxi. 19. "Let no fruit grow "on thee henceforth for ever; and immediately the fig-tree wither-"ed away." To be given up to such a condition, is a fearful judgment indeed, a curse with a witness; the sum of all plagues, miseries, and judgments, a fatal stroke at the root itself. It is a woe to hav

* Spiritual barrenness, p. 8.

a bad heart, (saith one) but it is the depth of woe to have a heart that never shall be made better. To be barren under the gospel, is a sore judgment, but to have that *pertinax sterilitas*, a pertinacious barrenness; this is to be twice dead, and plucked up by the root, as Jude speaks.

And to shew you the woful and miserable state and plight of such men, let the following particulars be weighed.

(1.) It is a stroke at the soul itself, an inward spiritual judgment; and by how much the more inward and spiritual any judgment is, by so much the more dreadful and lamentable. As soul-mercies are the best mercies, so soul-judgments are the saddest of all judgments. If it were but a temporal stroke upon the body, the loss of an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, though in itself it would be a considerable loss, yet it were nothing to this. *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, saith Chrysostom, speaking of bodily members; God hath given men double members, two eyes, if one be lost, the other supplies its want; two hands, two ears, two feet, that the failing of one may be supplied by the help of the other: *animam vero unam*, but one soul; if that perish, there is no other to supply its loss. "The soul, saith a "heathen *, is the man; that which is seen, is not the man." The apostle calls the body a vile body, Phil. iii. 21. and so it is, compared with the soul; and Daniel calls it the sheath, which is but a contemptible thing to the sword which is in it. Oh! it were far better that many bodies perish, than one soul; that every member were made the seat and subject of the most exquisite torture, than such a judgment should fall upon the soul.

(2.) It is the severest stroke God can inflict upon the soul in this life to give it up to barrenness; because it cuts off all hopes, frustrates all means, nothing can be a blessing to him. If one comes from the dead, if angels should descend from heaven to preach to him, there is no hope of him. If God shut up a man, who can open? Job xii. 14. As there was none found in heaven or earth that could open the seals of that book, Rev. v. 5. so is there no opening by the hand of the most able and skilful ministry, those seals of hardness, blindness, and unbelief, thus impressed upon the spirit. Whom justice so locks up, mercy will never let out. This is that which makes up the *Anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. which is the dreadfulest curse in all the book of God, accursed till the Lord come.

(3.) It is the most indiscernable stroke to themselves that can be, and by that so much the more desperate. Hence there is said to be poured out upon them the spirit of slumber, Isa. xxix. 10. "The "Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath "closed your eyes." Montanus renders it, The Lord hath mingled upon you the spirit of deep sleep. And so it is an allusion to a soporiferous medicine mingled, and made up of opium, and such-like

* Ουκ εστιν ανθρωπος το ορωμενον. Plato.

stupefactive ingredients, which casts a man into such a deep sleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. "Make "their eyes heavy, and their ears dull; lest they should see, and "hear, and be converted," Isa. vi. 9, 10. This is the heart that cannot repent which is spoken of, Rom. ii. 5. For men are not sensible at all of this judgment, they do not in the least suspect it, and that is their misery. Though they be cursed trees, which shall never bear any fruit to life, yet many times they bear abundance of other fair and pleasant fruits to the eye, excellent gifts, and rare endowments: and these deceive and undo them. Mat. vii. 22. "We have pro- "phesied in thy name;" this makes the wound desperate, that there is no finding of it, no probe to search it.

(4.) It is a stroke that cuts off from the soul all the comforts and sweetness of religion. A man may pray, hear, and confer, but all those duties are dry stalks to him, which yield no meat, no solid substantial nutriment; some common touches upon the affections he may sometimes find in duty, the melting voice or rhetoric of the preacher may perhaps strike his natural affections, as another tragical story pathetically delivered may do; but to have any real communion with God in ordinances, any discoveries or views of the beauty of the Lord in them, that he cannot have; for these are the special effects and operations of the Spirit, which are always restrained.

God hath said to such, as he did to them, Gen. vi. 3. "My "Spirit shall no longer strive with them;" and then what sweetness is there in ordinances? What is the word, separated from the Spirit, but a dead letter? It is the Spirit that quickens, 2 Cor. iii. 2. Friend, thou must know that the gospel works not like a *natural cause* upon those that hear it; if so, the effect would always follow, unless miraculously stopt and hindered; but it works like *a moral instituted cause*, whose efficacy and success depend upon the arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit with it. "The wind blows where it listeth, "so is very one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. "Of his "own will begat he us by the word of truth." Ordinances are as the pool of Bethesda, which had his healing virtue only when the *angel* moved the waters; but the Spirit never moves savingly upon the waters of ordinances, for its healing of their souls, how many years soever they lie by them; though others feel a divine power in them, yet they shall not. As the men that travelled with Paul, when Christ appeared to him from heaven, they saw the light, but heard not the voice which he heard to salvation: So it was with these; they see the ministers, hear the words, which are words of salvation to others, but not so to them. Concerning these miserable souls, we may sigh, and say to Christ, as Martha did concerning her brother Lazarus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, in this sermon, or in this prayer, this soul had not remained dead. But here is the woe that lies upon him, God is departed from the means and none can help him.

(5.) It is such a stroke upon the spirit of man, as is a fearful sign of his eternal reprobation. It is true, we cannot positively say of a man in this life, he is a reprobate, one that God will never shew mercy to; but yet there are some probable marks of it upon some men in this world, and they are of a trembling consideration wherever they appear; of which this is one of the saddest, 2 Cor. iv. 3. "If "our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost, in whom the god "of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not; "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of "God, should shine unto them." So Acts xiii. 48. "As many as "were ordained unto eternal life believed. Ye believe not, because "ye are not of my sheep," John x. 26. And again, Matth. xiii. 11. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to "them it is not given." There cannot be a more dreadful character of a person marked out for wrath, than to continue under the ordinances, as the rocks and miry places do under the natural influences of heaven. What blessed opportunities had Judas? He was under Christ's own ministry, he often heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; he was day and night in his company, yet never the better; and why? Because he was the *son of perdition*, that is, a man appointed to destruction and wrath.

(6.) And lastly, To add no more. It is such a stroke of God upon the souls of men, as immediately fore-runs hell and damnation, Heb. vi. 8. "But which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is "nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt." So that look as some saints in this world have had a prelibation or forestate of heaven, which the scripture calls *the earnest of the Spirit;* so this is a precursor of hell, a sign of wrath at the door. We may say of it as it is said of the pale horse in the Revelation, that hell follows it. "If "a man abide not in me, (saith Christ, John xv. 6.) he is cast forth as "a branch, and withered;" which is the very state of these barren, cursed souls. And what follows? Why, saith he, men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Lo, this is the vengeance which the gospel executes upon this barren ground.

REFLECTIONS.

The sincere soul's reflection.

1. Well then, blessed be God that made me feel the saving power of the gospel. O, let God be exalted for ever for this mercy! that how defective soever I am in common gifts, though I have a dull understanding, a leaking memory, a stammering tongue; yet I have felt, and do feel the power of the gospel upon my heart. I bless thee (my God) that although I labour under many spiritual infirmities, yet I am not sick of this incurable disease. I have given thee indeed just cause to inflict and execute this dreadful curse upon me also, but thou hast not dealt with me after my deserts,

but according to the riches of thy mercy. Some little fruit I bring forth, and what it is, is by virtue of my union with Jesus Christ, Rom. vii. 4. And this hath more in it as to my comfort, than all the glittering gifts and splendid performances of the most glorious hypocrite can yield to him: if I might have my choice (saith one) I would chuse and prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustic Christian before all the victories of Alexander, and triumphs of Cæsar. *Blessed therefore be the Lord, who hath abounded unto me in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

I cannot remember a sermon as another can, but blessed be God that I am able to favour it, and feel it? that I have an heart to love and a will to obey all that God discovers to be my duty.

The formal professor's reflection.

2. O, then how little cause have I to make my boast of ordinances, and glory in my external privileges, who never bear spiritual fruit under them? If I well consider my condition, there is matter of *trembling*, and not of *glorying* in these things. It may be while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my secure heart upon them the Lord hath been secretly blasting my soul under them, and insensibly executing this horrible curse by them. Shall I boast with Capernaum that *I am lifted up to heaven*, since I may with her, at last be cast down to hell? And if so, Lord, what a hell will my hell be? It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for me. It drew tears from the eyes of Christ, when he was looking upon Jerusalem, under the same consideration that I doubt I have cause to look upon my own soul, Luke xix. 41. "He wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, "even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy "peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." So long have I been a hearer, a professor of the gospel, so many years have I enjoyed its distinguishing ordinances, but have they not been all dry and empty things to me; hath not the spirit of formality acted me in them? Have not self-ends and worldly respects lain at the bottom of my best duties? Have not my discourses, in communion with saints been trade words, speaking what I have learnt, but not felt? Sad is my condition now, but it would be desperate and irrecoverable shouldst thou execute this curse upon me.

The less fruitful Christian's reflection.

3. And what may I think of my condition; Lord, I acknowledge my unprofitableness under the means hath been shameful; and this hath made my condition doubtful. I have often trembled for fear, lest my root had been blasted by such a curse? but if so, whence is this trembling! Whence these fears and sorrows about it? Doth such fruit grow in that soil which thou hast cursed! I am told but now, that on whom this judgment falls, to them thou givest an heart that cannot repent. Lord, I bless thee for these evidences of freedom from the curse: for the fruits of fear, sorrow, and holy jealousy.

* The laws of men spare for the fruit's sake, and wilt thou not spare me also, my God, if there be found in me a blessing in the bud, Isa. lxv. 8.

4. To conclude, what a serious reflection should this occasion in every dispenser of the gospel? How should he say when he goes to preach the gospel, I am going to preach that word which is to be *a savour of life or death unto these souls*; upon how many of my poor hearers may the curse of perpetual barrenness be executed this day! O how should such a thought melt his heart into compassion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earnestly with God for a better issue of the gospel than this upon them. *The gospel-preacher's reflections.*

THE POEM.

YOU that besides your pleasant fruitful fields,
Have useless bogs, and rocky ground that yields
You no advantage, nor doth quit your cost,
But all your pains and charges on them's lost:
Hearken to me, I'll teach you how to get
More profit by them than if they were set
At higher rents than what your tenants pay
For your most fertile lands; and here's the way.
Think when you view them, why the Lord hath chose
These, as the emblem to decipher those
That under gospel-grace grow worse and worse;
For means are fruitless when the Lord doth curse.
Sweet showers descend, the sun his beams reflects
On both alike, but not with like effects.
Observe and see how after the sweet showers
The grass and corn revive: the fragrant flowers
Shoot forth their beauteous heads, the vallies sing,
All fresh and green as in the verdant spring.
But rocks are barren still, and bogs are so;
Where nought but flags, and worthless rushes grow.
Upon these marshy grounds there lies this curse,
The more rain falls, by so much more the worse.
Even so the dews of grace that sweetly fall,
From gospel-clouds, are not alike to all.
The gracious soul doth germinate and bud,
But to the reprobate it doth no good.
He's like the wither'd fig-tree, void of fruit;
A fearful curse hath smote his very root.
The heart's made fat, the eyes with blindness seal'd;
The piercing'st truths the gospel e'er reveal'd,

* The Roman laws defer punishing a woman with child. *Chryst.*

Shall be to him but as the sun and rain
Are to obdurate rocks, fruitless and vain.
Be this your meditation when you walk
By rocks and fenny-grounds thus learn to talk
With your own souls; and let it make you fear
Lest that's your case that is described here.
This is the best improvement you can make
Of such bad ground; good soul I pray thee take
Some pains about them; though they barren be,
Thou seest how they may yield sweet fruits to thee.

CHAP. VII.

Upon the plowing of Corn-land.

The plowman guides his plow with care and skill;
So doth the Spirit in sound conviction still.

OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only strength, but much skill and judgment, to manage and guide the plow. The Hebrew word חרש which we translate to plow, signifies to be intent, as an artificer is about some curious piece of work. The plow must neither go too shallow, nor too deep in the earth; it must not indent the ground, by making crooked furrows, nor leap and make baulks in the good ground; but be guided as to a just depth of earth, so to cast the furrow in a straight line, that the floor or surface of the field may be made plain, as it is Isa. xxxviii. 25. And hence that expression, Luke ix. 62. "He "that puts his hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for the "kingdom of heaven." The meaning is, that as he that plows must have his eyes always forward, to guide and direct his hand in casting the furrows straight and even; (for his hand will be quickly out when his eye is off;) so he that heartily resolves for heaven, must addict himself wholly and intently to the business of religion, and not have his mind entangled with the things of this world, which he hath left behind him; whereby it appears, that the right management of the plow requires as much skill as strength.

APPLICATION.

THIS observation in nature serves excellently to shadow forth this proposition in divinity; that the work of the Spirit in convincing and humbling the heart of a sinner, is a work wherein

much of the wisdom, as well as power of God, is discovered. The work of repentance, and saving contrition is set forth in scripture by this metaphor of plowing *, Jer. iv. 3. Hos. x. 12. "Plow up your "fallow ground;" that is, be convinced, humbled, and broken-hearted for sin. And the resemblance betwixt both these works appears in the following particulars.

(1.) It is a hard and difficult work to plow, it is reckoned one of the painfullest manual labours; it is also a very hard thing to convince and humble the heart of a secure, stout, and proud sinner, indurate in wickedness. What Luther saith of a dejected soul, 'That 'it is as easy to raise the dead, as to comfort such a one.' The same I may say of the secure, confident sinner; it is as easy to rend the rocks, as to work saving contrition upon such a heart. *Citius ex pumice aquam;* all the melting language, and earnest entreaties of the gospel, cannot urge such a heart to shed a tear: Therefore it is called a heart of stone, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. a firm rock, Amos vi. 12. "Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen?" Yet when the Lord comes in the power of his Spirit, these rocks do rend, and yield to the power of the word.

(2.) The plow pierces deep into the bosom of the earth, makes, as it were, a deep gash or wound in the heart of it. So doth the Spirit upon the hearts of sinners, he pierces their very souls by conviction. Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this they were pricked, (or * "pierced point blank) to the heart." "Then the word divides the "soul and spirit," Heb. iv. 12. It comes upon the conscience with such piercing dilemmas, and tilts the sword of conviction so deep into their souls, that there is no stanching the blood, no healing this wound, till Christ himself come, and undertake the cure. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo;* this barbed arrow cannot be pulled out of their hearts by any, but the hand that shot it in. Discourse with such a soul about his troubles, and he will tell you, that all the sorrows that ever he had in this world, loss of estate, health, children, or whatever else, are but flea-bitings to this; this swallows up all other troubles. See how that Christian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. is dissolved into tears; "Now deep calleth unto deep at the noise of his water-spouts, "when the waves and billows of God go over the soul." Spiritual sorrows are deep waters, in which the stoutest and most magnanimous soul would sink and drown, did not Jesus Christ, by a secret and supporting hand, hold it up, and preserve it.

(3.) The plow rends the earth in parts and pieces, which before was united, and makes those parts hang loose, which formerly lay close. Thus doth the Spirit of conviction rend asunder the heart and its most beloved lusts. Joel ii. 13. "Rend your hearts, and not your "garments." That is, rather than your garments; for the sense is

* *Glossius Rhet. Sacra, p.* 300.

† Κατενυγησαν, *punctim cedo, pungendo penetro.*

comparative, though the expression be negative. And this renting implies not only acute pain, flesh cannot be rent asunder without anguish, nor yet only force and violence; the heart is a stubborn and knotty piece, and will not easily yield; but it also implies a disunion of parts united. As when a garment, or the earth, or any contiguous body is rent, those parts are separated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the soul were glued fast together before, there was no parting of them, they would as soon part with their lives, as with their lusts; but now when the heart is rent from them truly, it is also rent from them everlastingly, Ezek. vii. 15, to 19.

(4.) The plow turns up and discovers such things as lay hid in the bosom of the earth before, and were covered under a fair green surface, from the eyes of men. Thus when the Lord plows up the heart of a sinner by conviction, then the secrets of his heart are made manifest, 2 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. the most secret and shameful sins will then out; for "the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any "two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and "spirit, the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts "and secret intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. It makes the fire burn inwardly, so that the soul hath no rest till confession give a vent to trouble. Fain would the shuffling sinner conceal and hide his shame, but the word follows him through all his sinful shifts, and brings him at last to be his own, both accuser, witness, and judge.

(5.) The work of the plow is but *opus ordinabile*, a preparative work in order to fruit. Should the husbandman plow his ground ever so often, yet if the seed be not cast in, and quickened, in vain is the harvest expected. Thus conviction also is but a preparative to a farther work upon the soul of a sinner; if it stick there, and goes no farther, it proves but an abortive, or untimely birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have stuck; they have been like a field plowed, but not sowed, which is a matter of trembling consideration; for hereby their sin is greatly aggravated, and their eternal misery so much the more increased. O when a poor damned creature shall with horror reflect upon himself in hell, How near was I once, under such a sermon, to conversion! my sins were set in order before me, my conscience awakened, and terrified me with the guilt of them: many purposes and resolves I had then to turn to God, which had they been perfected by answerable execution, I had never come to this place of torment; but there I stuck, and that was my eternal undoing. Many souls have I known so terrified with the guilt of sin, that they have come roaring under horrors of conscience to the preacher; so that one would think such a breach had been made betwixt them and sin, as could never be reconciled; and yet as angry as they were in that fit with sin, they have hugged and embraced it again.

(6.) It is best plowing when the earth is prepared and mollified by

the showers of rain; then the work goes on sweetly and easily, and never doth the heart so kindly melt, as when the gospel-clouds dissolve, and the free grace and love of Jesus Christ comes sweetly showering down upon it; then it relents and mourns ingenuously, Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, "and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when "I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done." So it was with that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. when the Lord Jesus had discovered to her the superabounding riches of his grace, in the pardon of her manifold abominations, her heart melted within her, she washed the feet of Christ with tears. And indeed, there is as much difference betwixt the tears which are forced by the terrors of the law, and those which are extracted by the grace of the gospel, as there is betwixt those of a condemned malefactor, who weeps to consider the misery he is under, and those of a pardoned malefactor, that receives his pardon at the foot of the ladder, and is melted by the mercy and clemency of his gracious prince towards him.

(7.) The plow kills those rank weeds which grow in the field, turns them up by the roots, buries and rots them. So doth saving conviction kill sin at the root, makes the soul sick of it, begets indignation in the heart against it, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The word Ἀγανάκτησιν, there signifies the rising of the stomach, and being angry even unto sickness; religious wrath is the fiercest wrath, now the soul cannot endure sin, it trembles at it. "I find a woman more "bitter than death," (saith penitent Solomon) Eccl. vii. 26. Conviction, like a surfeit, makes the soul to lothe what it formerly loved and delighted in.

(8.) That field is not well plowed, where the plow jumps and skips over good ground and makes baulks, it must run up the whole field alike; and that heart is not savingly convicted, where any lust is spared, and left untouched. Saving conviction extends itself to all sins, not only to sin in general, with this cold confession, *I am a sinner;* but to the particulars of sin, yea, to the particular circumstances and aggravations of time, place, manner, occasions, thus and thus have I done; to the sin of nature, as well as practice. "Behold I "was shapen in iniquity," Psal. li. 5. There must be no baulking of any sin; the sparing of one sin, is a sure argument that thou art not truly humbled for any sin. So far is the convinced soul from a studious concealment of a beloved sin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual sin.

(9.) New ground is much more easily plowed, than that which by long lying out of tillage is more consolidated, and clung together, by deep-rooted thorns and brambles, which render it difficult to the plowman. This old ground is like an old sinner, that hath lain a long time hardening under the means of grace. O the difficulty of convincing such a person! sin hath got such rooting in his heart, he is so habituated to the reproofs and calls of the word, that few such

are wrought upon. How many young persons are called to one obdurate, inveterate sinner? I do not say but God may call home such a soul at the eleventh hour, but I may say of these, compared with others, as Solomon speaks, Eccl. vii. 28. "One man among a thou-"sand have I found," &c. Few that have long resisted the gospel, that come afterwards to feel the saving efficacy thereof.

REFLECTIONS.

The true convert's reflection.

1. O grace, for ever to be admired! that God should send forth his word and Spirit to plow up my hard and stony heart, yea, mine, when he hath left so many of more tender, ingenious, sweet, and melting tempers without any culture or means of grace. O blessed gospel, heart-dissolving voice! I have felt thine efficacy, I have experienced thy divine and irresistible power; thou art indeed sharper than any two-edged sword, and woundest to the heart; but thy wounds are the wounds of a friend: All the wounds thou hast made in my soul, were so many doors opened to let in Christ; all the blows thou gavest my conscience, were but to beat off my soul from sin, which I embraced, and had retained to my everlasting ruin, hadst thou not separated them and me. O wise and merciful Physician! thou didst indeed bind me with cords of conviction and sorrow, but it was only to cut out that stone in my heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. O how did I struggle and oppose thee, as if thou hadst come with the sword of an enemy, rather than the lance and probe of a skilful and tender-hearted physician? Blessed be the day wherein my sin was discovered and embittered! O happy sorrows, which prepared for such matchless joys! O blessed hand, which turned my salt waters into pleasant wine! and after many pangs and sorrows of soul, didst, at length, bring forth deliverance and peace.

The stubborn heart's reflection.

2. But O what a rock of adamant is this heart of mine! that never yet was wounded, and savingly pierced for sin by the terrors of the law, or melting voice of the gospel! long have I sat under the word, but when did I feel a relenting pang? O my soul? my stupified soul! thou hast got an antidote against repentance, but hast thou any against hell? Thou canst keep out the sense of sin now, but art thou able to keep out the terrors of the Lord hereafter? If thou couldst turn a deaf ear to the sentence of Christ in the day of judgment, as easily as thou dost to the entreaties of Christ in the day of grace, it were somewhat; but surely there is no defence against that. Ah! fool that I am, to quench these convictions, unless I knew how to quench those flames they warn me of.

The miscarrying soul's reflection.

3. And may not I challenge the first place among all the mourners in the world, who have all lost those convictions which at several times came upon me under the word? I have been often awa-

kened by it, and filled with terrors and tremblings under it; but those troubles have soon worn off again, and my heart (like water removed from the fire) returned to its native coldness. Lord! what a dismal case am I in? many convictions have I choaked and strangled, which, it may be, shall never more be revived, until thou revive them against me in judgment. I have been in pangs, and brought forth nothing but wind; my troubles have wrought no deliverance, neither have my lusts fallen before them? My conscience, indeed, hath been sometimes sick with sin, yea, so sick as to vomit them up by an external, partial reformation? but then, with the dog, have I turned again to my vomit, and now I doubt I am given over to an heart that cannot repent. O that these travelling pangs could be quickened again! but alas! they are ceased, I am like a prisoner escaped, and again recovered, whom the goaler loads with double irons. Surely, O my soul! if thy spiritual troubles return not again, they are but gone back to bring eternal troubles. It is with thee, O my soul! as with a man whose bones have been broken, and not well set; who must, (how terrible soever it appear to him) endure the pain of breaking and setting them again, if ever he be made a sound man. O that I might rather chuse to be the object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy sparing cruelty! if thou plow not up my heart again by compunction, I know it must he rent in pieces at last by desperation.

THE POEM.

THERE's skill in plowing, that the plowman knows,
For if too shallow, or too deep he goes,
The seed is either bury'd, or else may
To rooks and daws become an easy prey.
This, as a lively emblem, fitly may
Describe the blessed Spirit's work and way:
Whose work on souls, with this doth symbolize;
Betwixt them both, thus the resemblance lies.
Souls are the soil, conviction is the plow,
God's workmen draw, the Spirit shews them how.
He guides the work, and in good ground doth bless
His workmen's pains, with sweet and fair success.
The heart prepar'd, he scatters in the seed,
Which in its season springs, no fowl nor weed
Shall pick it up, or choak this springing corn,
'Till it be housed in the heavenly barn.
When thus the Spirit plows up the fallow ground,
When with such fruits his servant's work is crown'd;
Let all the friends of Christ, and souls say now,
As they pass by the fields, *God speed the plow.*
Sometimes this plow thin shelfy ground doth turn,
That little seed which springs, the sun-beams burn.

The rest uncover'd lies, which fowls devour.
Alas! their heart was touch'd, but not with pow'r.
The cares and pleasures of this world have drown'd
The seed before it peep'd above the ground.
Some springs indeed, the Scripture saith that some
Do taste the powers of the world to come.
These embrios never come to timely birth,
Because the seed that's sown wants depth of earth.
Turn up, O God, the bottom of my heart;
And to the seed that's sown, do thou impart
Thy choicest blessing. Though I weep and mourn
In this wet seed-time, if I may return
With sheaves of joy; these fully will reward
My pains and sorrows, be they ne'er so hard.

CHAP. VIII.

Upon the Seed-Corn.

The choicest wheat is still reserv'd for seed,
But gracious principles are choice indeed.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN are very careful and curious about their seed-corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the best and most excellent of its kind. Isa. xxviii. 25. "He casteth in the prin-"cipal wheat." If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reserved for seed. It is usual with husbandmen to pick and lease their seed-corn by hand, that they may separate the cockel and darnel, and all the lighter and hollow grains from it, wherein they manifect their discretion; for, according to the vigour and goodness of the seed, the fruit and production are like to be.

APPLICATION.

THE choice and principal seed corn, with which the fields are sowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably shadow forth those excellent principles of grace infused into the regenerate soul. Their agreement, as they are both seed, is obvious, in the ten following particulars; and their excellency above other principles in seven more.

1. The earth at first naturally brought forth corn, and every seed yielding fruit, without human industry; but since the curse came

upon it, it must be plowed and sowed, or no fruit can be expected. So man, at first, had all the principles of holiness in his nature, but now they must be infused by regeneration, or else his nature is as void of holiness as the barren and untilled desert is of corn.

2. The earlier the seed is sown, the better it is rooted, and enabled to endure the asperities of the winter; so when grace is early infused, when nature is sanctified in the bud, grace is thereby exceedingly advantaged. It was Timothy's singular advantage, that he knew the Scriptures from a child.

3. Frosts and snows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the seed, and make it spread and take root much the better. So do sanctified afflictions, which usually the people of God meet with after their calling, and often in their very seed time. 1 Thes. i. 6. "And "you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the "word in much affliction." But if they have fair weather then, to be sure they shall meet with weather hard enough afterwards. Heb. x. 32. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after "ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."

4. When the seed is cast into the earth, it must be covered up by the harrow, the use whereof in husbandry, is not only to lay a plain floor (as they speak) but to open and let in the corn to the bosom of the earth, and there cover it up for its security from birds that would devour it. Thus doth the most wise God provide for the security of that grace which he at first disseminated in the hearts of his people. He is as well the finisher as the author of their grace, Heb. xii. 2. and of this they may be confident, that he that hath begun a good work in them will perform it unto the day of Christ. The care of God over the graces of his people, is like the covering of the seed for security.

5. Seed-corn is in its own nature of much more value and worth than other corn; the husbandman casts in the principal wheat. So are the seeds of grace sown in the renewed soul, for it is called *the seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *The divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. One dram of grace is far beyond all the glory of this world; it is more precious than gold which perishes. 1 Pet. i. 7. "The price of it is "above rubies, and all that thou canst desire is not to be compared "with it," Prov. iii. 15.

6. There is a great deal of spirit and vigour in a little seed; though it be small in bulk, yet it is great in virtue and efficacy. Gracious habits are also vigorous and efficacious things. Such is their efficacy that they overcome the world, 1 John v. 4. "Whatsoever is born "of God overcometh the world." They totally alter and change the person in whom they are. "He that persecuted us in times past, "now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed." They enable the soul to do and suffer great things for God, Heb. xi. 33, 34, 35.

7. The stalk and ear are potentially and virtually in a small grain of corn. So are all the fruits of obedience which believers afterwards

bring forth to God, virtually contained in those habits or seeds of grace. It is strange to consider, that from a *mustard-seed*, (which, as Christ saith, is the least of all seeds) should grow such great branches that the birds of the air may build their nests in them. Surely, the heroical and famous acts and achievements of the most renowned believers sprang from small beginings at first, to that eminency and glory.

8. The fruitfulness of the seed depends upon the sun and rain, by which they are quickened, as opened largely in the next chapter. And the principles of grace in us have as necessary a dependence upon the assisting and exciting grace without us. For though it be true, they are immortal seed; yet that is not so much from their own strength as from the promises made to them, and that constant influx from above, by which they are revived and preserved from time to time.

9. The seed is fruitful in some soils more than in others, prospers much better, and comes sooner to maturity. So do graces thrive better and grow faster in some persons than in others. "Your faith "groweth exceedingly," 2 Thes. i. 3. "Whilst the things that are "in others are ready to die," Rev. iii. 2. Though no man's heart be naturally a kind soil to grace, yet doubtless grace is more advantaged in some dispositions than in others.

10. And lastly, their agreement, as seed, appears in this, the seed-corn is scattered into all parts of the field, as proportionally and equally as may be. So is grace diffused into all the faculties: the judgment, will, and all the affections are sowed with these new principles. "The God of peace sanctify you wholly," 1 Thes. v. 23.

And thus you see why principles of grace are called seed. Now, in the next place, (which is the second thing promised, and mainly designed in this chapter) to shew you the choiceness and excellency of these holy principles with which sanctified souls are embellished and adorned; and to convince you that true grace excels all other principles by which other persons are acted, even as the principal wheat doth the chaff, and refuse stuff, I shall here institute a comparison betwixt grace and the most splendid, common gifts in the world; and its transcendent excellency above them all, will evidently appear in the seven following particulars.

1. The most excellent common gifts come out of the common treasury of God's bounty, and that in a natural way. They are but the improvement of a man's natural abilities, (or as one calls them) the sparks of nature blown up by the wind of a more benign and liberal education; but principles of grace are of a divine and heavenly original and extraction, not induced or raised from nature, but supernaturally infused by the Spirit from on high, John iii. 6. "That which "is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is "spirit." When a soul is sanctified by them, "he partakes of the „ divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. "Is born not of flesh, nor of blood,

" nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. In this respect they differ from gifts, as the heavenly *manna* which was rained down from heaven differs from common bread, which, by pains and industry, the earth produces in a natural way.

2. The best natural gifts afford not that sweetness and solid comfort to the soul that grace doth; they are but a dry stalk that affords no meat for a soul to feed on. A man may have an understanding full of light, and an heart void of comfort at the same time; but grace is a fountain of purest living streams of peace and comfort, 1 Pet. i. 8. " Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: " light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." All true pleasures and delights are seminally in grace, Psal. xcvii. 11. They are sown for them in these divine and heavenly graces, which are glory in the bud.

3. Gifts adorn the person, but do not secure the soul from wrath. A man may be admired for them among men, and rejected eternally by God. Who can considerately read that sixth chapter of the Hebrews, and not tremble to think in what a forlorn case a soul may be, though set off and accomplished with the rarest endowments of this kind! Mat. vii. 22. We read, that many shall say to Christ in " that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and " in thy name cast out devils," &c. and yet themselves at last cast out as a prey to devils. How divinely and rhetorically did Balaam speak and prophesy, Numb. xxiii. What rare and excellent parts had the Scribes and Pharisees? who upon that account, were stiled *Principes seculi*, the princes of the world. Cor. ii. 8. What profound and excellent parts had the heathen *sages* and *philosophers?* These things are so far from securing the soul from the wrath to come, that they often expose it unto wrath, and are as oil to increase the eternal burnings; but now gracious principles are the τα εχομενα σωτηριας, as the apostle calls them, Heb. vi. things that accompany and have salvation in them. These are the things on which the promises of salvation run; and these treasures are never found but in elect vessels. Glory is by promise assured and made over to him that possesses them. There is but a little point of time betwixt him and the glorified spirits above. And how inconsiderable a matter is a little time, which contracts and winds up apace? For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. And hence the scripture speaks of them as already saved, Rom. viii. 24: " We are saved by hope," because it is as sure as if we were in heaven. We are made to sit in heavenly places.

Like a precious stone in a toad's head.

4. Gifts may damnify the person that possesses them, and it may be better in respect of a man's own condition he had never had them. *Knowledge* (saith the apostle) *puffeth up*, 1 Cor. viii. 1. makes the soul proud and flatulent. It is a hard thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The saint's knowledge is better than the scholar's; for he hath his own heart instead of a commentary to help

him. Aristotle said, a little knowledge about heavenly things, though conjectural, is better than much of earthly things, though certain. "The world by wisdom knew not God," (saith the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 12.) i. e. Their learning hanged in their light, they were too wise to submit to the simplicity of the gospel. The excellent parts of the old heretics did but serve to midwife into the world the monstrous birth of soul-damning heresies. *Cupit abs te ornari diabolus*, as Austin said to that ingenious young scholar; the devil desires to be adorned by thee. But now grace itself is not subject to such abuses, it cannot be the proper *univocal cause* of any evil effect; it cannot puff up the heart, but always humbles it, nor serves the devil's designs, but ever opposes them.

5. Gifts may be given a man for the sake of others, and not out of any love to himself; they are but as an excellent dish of meat which a man sends to a nurse, not for her sake so much as for his child's that sucks her. God, indeed, makes use of them to do his children good, the church is benefited by them, though themselves are but like cooks; they prepare excellent dishes, on which the saints feed, and are nourished, though themselves taste them not. They are *dona ministrantia, non sanctificantio*, ministering, but not sanctifying gifts, proceeding not from the good-will of God to him that hath them, but to those he benefits by them. And O what a sad consideration will this be one day to such a person, to think I helped such a soul to heaven, while I myself must lodge in hell?

6. Sin in the reign and power of it, may cohabit with the most excellent natural gifts under the same roof, I mean in the same heart. A man may have the tongue of an angel, and the heart of a devil. The wisdom of the philosophers (saith Lanctantius) *non excindit vitia sed abscondit*, doth not root out, but hide their vices. The learned Pharisees were but painted sepulchres. Gifts are but as a fair glove drawn over a foul hand: But now grace is incompatible with sin in dominion, it purifies the heart, Acts xv. 6. cleanses the conscience, Heb. ix. 14. crucifies the affections and lusts of the flesh, Gal. v. 24. is not content with the concealment, but ruin of corruptions.

7. And lastly, Gifts must leave us at last. "Whether there be "knowledge that shall cease. All flesh is grass, and the goodliness "of it as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, the flower "fadeth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever," Isa. xl. 6, 8. Many times they leave a man before death. One knock, if it hit right, (as one saith) may make a wise man a fool: but, to be sure, they all leave us at death. "Doth not his excellency which is in him go "away?" Job iv. 21. yea, then all natural excellency departs: Death strips the soul of all those splendid ornaments; then the rhetorical tongue is struck dumb; the nimble wit and curious fancy shall entertain your ears with no more pleasant discourses. *Nunquam jocos dabis*, as Adrian said to his departing soul; but grace ascends with the

soul into eternity, and there receives its perfection, and accomplishment. Gifts take their leave of the soul as Orpah did of Naomi; but grace saith then, as Ruth, Where thou goest I will go, and, *where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing shall separate thee and me.* Now put all this together, and then judge whether the apostle spoke hyperboles, when he said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts, "and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way," 1 Cor. xii. ult. And thus you have the choiceness of these principles also.

REFLECTIONS.

The gracious soul's reflection. The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, may the gracious soul say: How defective soever I am in gifts, yet blessed be the Lord who hath sown the true seeds of grace in my heart. What though I am not famed and honoured among men, let it suffice me that I am precious in the eyes of the Lord. Though he hath not abounded to me in gifts of nature, "Yet blessed be the God and "Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abounded to me in all "spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. i. 3. Is not a true jewel, though spurned in the dirt, more precious than a false one, though set in gold? Why art thou troubled, O my soul, for the want of these things which reprobates may have? and art not rather admiring and blessing God for those things which none but the darlings and favourites of heaven can have? Is not an ounce of pure gold more valuable than many pounds of gilded brass? What though the dews of Helicon descend not upon my head, if in the mean time the sweet influences of Sion fall upon my heart? O my God! how much soever others are elated by the light of their knowledge, I have cause, with humility to adore thee for the heavenly heat with which thou hast warmed my affections.

The deceived soul's reflection. Pause a while, my soul, upon this point: With what seed is my heart sown, and of what kind are those things wherein I excel others? Are they indeed special seeds of grace, or common gifts and natural excellencies? If the latter, little cause have I to pride myself in them, were they ten thousand times more than they are. If these things be indeed the things that accompany salvation, the seed of God, the true and real work of grace, then, (1.) How comes it to pass that I never found my throes, or travailing pangs in the production of them? It is affirmed and generally acknowledged, that the *new creature* is never brought forth without such pain and compunctions of heart, Acts ii. 37. I have indeed often felt an aching head, whilst I have read and studied to increase my knowledge: But when did I feel an aching heart for sin? O I begin to suspect that it is not right. Yea, (2.) And my suspicion increases while I consider that grace is of an humbling nature, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Lord, how have I been elated by my gifts, and valued myself above what was meet? O

how have I delighted in the noise of the Pharisee's trumpet! Mat. vi. 2. No music so sweet as that. Say, O my conscience, have I not, delighted more in the theatre than the closet? In the praise of men than the approbation of God? O how many evidences dost thou produce against me! Indeed these are sad symptoms that I have shewed thee, but there is yet another, which renders thy case more suspicious yet, yea, that which thou canst make no rational defence against, even the ineffectualness of all thy gifts and knowledge to mortify any one of all thy lusts. It is beyond all dispute, that gifts may, but grace cannot consist without mortification of sin, Gal. v. 24. Now what lust hath fallen before these excellent parts of mine? Doth not pride, passion, covetousness, and indeed the whole body of sin, live and thrive in me as much as ewer? Lord, I yield the cause, I can defend it no longer against my conscience, which casts and condemns me, by full proof, to be but in a wretched, cursed, lamentable state, notwithstanding all my knowledge and flourishing gifts. O shew me a more excellent way. Lord! that I had the sincerity of the poorest saint, though I should lose the applause of all my parts; with these I see I may go to hell, but without some better thing no hope of heaven.

THE POEM.

GREAT difference betwixt that seed is found,
With which you sow your sev'ral plots of ground.
Seed-wheat doth far excel in dignity
The cheaper barley, and the coarser rye:
Tho' in themselves they good and wholesome are,
Yet these with choicest wheat may not compare.
Men's hearts, like fields, are sow'd with different grain,
Some baser, some more noble, some again
Excelling both the former, more than wheat
Excels that grain your swine and horses eat.
For principles of mere morality,
Like cummin, barley, fitches, pease, or rye,
In those men's hearts are often to be found,
Whom yet the scriptures called cursed ground;
And nobler principles than these, sometime
Call'd common grace, and spiritual gifts, which shine
In some men's heads, where is their habitation;
Yet they are no companions of salvation.
These purchase honour both from great and small:
But I must tell thee, that if this be all,
Tho' like an angel in these gifts you shine
Amongst blind mortals, for a little time;
The day's at hand, when, such as thou must take
Thy lot with devils in th' infernal lake.
But principles of special, saving grace,

Whose seat is in the heart, not head, or face;
Like solid wheat sown in a fruitful field,
Shall spring, and flourish, and at last will yield
A glorious harvest of eternal rest,
To him that nourish'd them within his breast.
O grace! how orient art thou! how divine!
What is the glory of all gifts to thine!
Disseminate this seed within my heart,
My God, I pray thee, tho' thou should'st impart
The less of gifts; then I may truly say,
That thou hast shew'd me the more excellent way.

CHAP. IX.

Upon springing-weather after seed-time.

By heaven's influence corn and plants do spring,
God's show'rs of grace do make his valleys sing.

OBSERVATION.

THE earth, after that it is plowed and sowed, must be watered, and warmed with the dews and influences of heaven, or no fruit can be expected. If God do not open to you his good treasure, the heavens to give rain unto the land in its season, and bless all the work of your hands, as it is Deut. xxviii. 12. the earth cannot yield her increase. The order and independence of natural causes in the production of fruit, is excellently described, Hos. i. 21, 22. "I will "hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth "shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear Jez-"reel." Jezreel must have corn, and wine, and oil, or they cannot live; they cannot have it unless the earth bring it forth; the earth cannot bring it forth without the heavens; the heavens cannot yield a drop unless God hear them, that is, unlock and open them. * 'Nature, and natural causes, are nothing else but the order in 'which God works.' This some heathens, by the light of nature, acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the morning, they did lay one hand upon the plow (to speak their own part to be painfulness) and held up the other hand to Ceres, the goddess of corn, to shew that their expectation of plenty was from their supposed deity †. I fear many Christians lay both hands to the plow, and seldom lift up heart, or hand to God, when about that work.

* *Natura nihil aliud est quam divinorum operum ordo.* Berentius.
† Weem's Cerem. Law.

There was an husbandman (saith * Mr. Smith) that always sowed good seed, but never had good corn; at last a neighbour came to him, and said, I will tell you what probably may be the cause of it; it may be (said he) you do not steep your seed: No, truly said the other, nor did I ever hear that seed must be steeped. Yes, surely, said his neighbour, and I will tell you how; it must be steeped in prayer. When the party heard this, he thanked him for his counsel, reformed his fault, and had as good corn as any man whatsoever. Surely it is not the husbandman's, but God's steeps, that drop fatness. *Alma mater terra*, the earth indeed is a fruitful mother, but the rain which fecundates, and fertilizes it, hath no other Father but God, Job xxxviii. 28.

APPLICATION.

AS impossible it is (in an ordinary way) for souls to be made fruitful in grace and holiness, without the dews and influences of ordinances, and the blessing of God upon them, as for the earth to yield her fruit without the natural influences of heaven: for look, what dews, showers, and clear shinings after rain are to the fields, that the word and ordinances of God are to the souls of men. "My "doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon "the grass," Deut. xxxii. 2. "For as the rain cometh down, and the "snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring "forth and bud; so shall my word be that goeth forth of my "mouth," Isa. lv. 10, 11. And as the doctrine of the gospel is rain, so gospel-ministers are the clouds in which those heavenly vapours are bound up: the resemblance lies in the following particulars.

1. The rain comes from heaven, Acts xiv. 17. "He gave us "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons," *&c.* The doctrines of the gospel are also of an heavenly extraction and descent; they are heavenly truths which are brought to you in earthen vessels; things that were hid in God, and come from his bosom, Eph. iii. 8, 9. What Nicodemus said of Christ is, in a proportion, true of every faithful dispenser of the gospel, "Thou art a teacher come from God," John iii. 2. You are not to look upon the truths which ministers deliver, as the mere effects and fruits of their inventions and parts; they are but the conduits through which these celestial waters are conveyed to you. It is all heavenly, the officers are from heaven, Eph. iv. 12. their doctrine from heaven, Eph. iii. 8, 9. the efficacy and success of it from heaven, 1 Cor. iii. 3. "What I received of the Lord (saith Paul) that have I delivered unto you," 1 Cor. xi. 23. The same may every gospel-minister say too. That is the first:

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* Smith's Essex Dove.

And then, *(2dly,)* The rains falls by divine direction and appointment: "He causes it to rain upon one city, and not upon another," Amos iv. 7. You shall often see a cloud dissolve and spread itself upon one place, when there is not a drop within a few miles of it. Thus is the gospel sent to shed its rich influences upon one place, and not upon another; it pours down showers of blessings upon one town or parish, whilst others are dry like the ground which lay near to Gideon's wet fleece. "To you is the word of this salvation sent," Acts xiii. 26. *Sent;* it comes not by *chance*, but by *commission* and appointment, and it is sent to you by special direction. Ministers can no more go whither they please, than the failing clouds can move against the wind. Paul and Timothy, were two fruitful clouds that sent down many sweet refreshing showers upon every place whither they came. The Lord sent them through Phrygia and Galatia, but forbad them to preach the word in Asia, Acts xvi. 6. "And "when they essayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them "not," v. 7. But a man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a vision, and prayed him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us," ver. 9. Thus you see how the *mystical*, as well as the *natural* clouds are moved according to divine counsel; and though ministers are not now disposed to their respective places, in such an extraordinary way, yet there is still a special hand of the Spirit guiding their motions, which is seen partly in qualifying them for such a people, and partly in drawing out their hearts to elect and call them, and inclining their hearts to accept the call.

3. There is a great deal of difference in the showers of rain that fall upon the earth. Sometimes you have an hasty shower, which makes the ways float, and the streets run, but it is gone presently, the earth hath but little benefit by it; and sometimes you have a sweet, gentle soaking rain, that moderately soaks to the root, and refreshes the earth abundantly. This is called the *small rain* and the former, *the great rain of his strength*, Job xxxvii. 6. So it is in these spiritual showers; the effects of some sermons (like a sudden spout of rain) are very transient, that touch the heart a little for the present, by way of conviction or comfort, but it fleets away immediately, Jam. i. 23. At other times the gospel, like a settled, moderate rain, soaks to the root, to the very heart. So did that sweet shower which fell, Acts ii. 37. It searched the root, it went to the heart; the influences of it are sometimes abiding, and do much longer remain in, and refresh the heart, than the rain doth the earth. There be effects left in some hearts, by some sermons and duties, that will never go out of it as long as they live. "I will never forget thy precepts, for by "them thou hast quickened me," Psal. cxix. 93.

4. The rain is most beneficial to the earth, when there come sweet, warm sun-blasts with it, or after it. This the scripture calls "a clear shining after rain," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. by which the *seminal*

virtue of the earth is drawn forth, and then the herbs, flowers, and corn sprout abundantly. So it is with gospel-showers, when the Sun of righteousness opens upon poor souls under the word, darting down the beams of grace and love upon them, whilst they are attending on it, (just as you sometimes see a sweet shower fall while the sun shines out). O how comfortable is this! and effectual to melt the heart! And as the warm rain is most refreshing, so when the word comes warmly, from the melting affections of the preacher, who imparts not only the gospel, but his own soul with it, 1 Thess ii. 8. this doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the lips of the unaffected speaker.

5. Showers of rain do exceedingly refresh the earth, as a man is refreshed by a draught of water, when his spirits are even spent. O how welcome is a shower to the thirsty ground! Hence the little hills are said to rejoice on every side, yea, to shout for joy and sing when a shower comes, Psal. lxv. 12, 13. But never were showers of rain so sweetly refreshing to the thirsty earth, as gospel-showers are to gracious souls, Col. iv. 8. they comfort their very hearts. What joy was there in Samaria, when the gospel came to that place? Acts viii. 8. It revives the soul, it is *mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde*, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and a very jubilee in the heart.

6. Rain is necessary at seed-time, to make ready the earth to receive the seed, Psal. lxv. 9, 10. "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; "thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of wa- "ter; thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it; "thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the fur- "rows thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou blessest the "springing thereof." And this the scripture calls the former rain. And as this is necessary about seed-time, so the latter rain is as needful about earing-time, to disclose the ear and to bring it to perfection; both these are great blessings to the earth, and conduce to a plenti- ful harvest, Joel ii. 23, 24. "Be glad then ye children of Sion, and "rejoice in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former "rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rair, "the former and the latter rain in the first month, and the floors "shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and "oil." Thus the gospel hath a double use and benefit also. It is necessary as the former rain at seed-time, it causes the first spring of grace in the heart, Psal. xix. 7. And there could be (in an ordinary way) no spring of grace without it, Prov. xxix. 18. And as this for- mer rain is necessary to cause the first spring of grace, so also it hath the use of the latter rain to ripen those precious fruits of the Spirit in the souls of believers, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. "He gave some apostles, "and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and "teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the mi- "nistry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the

" unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a per-
" fect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Were all the elect converted unto God, yet still there would be a necessity of a gospel-ministry.

7. After a great glut of rain, usually there comes a drought; it is a common country proverb, *Wet and dry pay one another.* And truly when a people are glutted with a fulness of gospel-mercies it is usual with God to shut up and restrain the gospel-clouds, that, for a time at least, there be no dews upon them, and thereby teach them to prize their despised (because common) mercies at an higher rate. For as a good man once said, mercies are best known by the back, and most prized when most wanted. " In those days the word of " the Lord was precious, there was no open vision," 1 Sam. iii. 1. It is with spiritual as with temporal food, slighted when plenteous, but if a famine once come, then every bit of bread is precious. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction, and of her misery, all her pleasant things, that she had in the days of old, Lam. i. 7. It is both a sinful and dangerous thing to wantonize with gospel-mercies, and despise the plainest (if faithful) ministers of the gospel. The time may come when you may be glad of the plainest sermon from the mouth of the meanest ambassador of Christ.

8. To conclude, The prayers of saints are the keys that open and shut the natural clouds, and cause them either to give out or withhold their influences, Jam. v. 17, 18. " Elias was a man subject to " like passions, as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not " rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and " six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and " the earth brought forth her fruit." God hath subjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his saints, Isa. xlv. 11.

Prayer is also the golden key which opens these mystical gospel-clouds, and dissolves them into sweet, gracious showers. God will have the whole work of the ministry carried on by the prayers of his people; they first obtain their ministers by prayer, Luke x. 2. " Pray " ye the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into the vine-" yard." It is by the help of prayer that they are carried on, and enabled to exercise their ministry: They may tell their people as a great general once told his soldiers, ' That he flew upon their wings.' " Pray for me, (saith the great apostle) that utterance may be given " me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mys-" teries of the gospel," Eph. vi. 19. Yea, by the saints prayers it is, that ministers obtain the success and fruits of their labours, 2 Thess. iii. 1. " Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord " may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with you." And thus you have the metaphor opened. Now, O! that these truths might come down in sweet showers upon the hearts both of *ministers* and people in the following reflections.

REFLECTIONS.

I. Am I then a cloud? And is my doctrine as rain to water the Lord's inheritance? And yet do I think it much to be tossed up and down by the furious winds and storms of persecution? Do not I see the clouds above me in continual motions and agitations? And shall I dream of a fixed, settled state? No; false teachers, who are clouds without rain, are more likely to enjoy that than I. Which of all the prophets have not been tossed and hurried worse than I? Acts vii. 52. He that will not let men alone to be quiet in their lusts, must expect but little quiet from men in this life. But it is enough, Lord, that a rest remaineth for thy servant; let me be so wise to secure a rest to come, and not so vain to expect it on earth.

Three reflections for gospel-ministers.

2. And, O that I might study those instruction clouds, from which as from the bottles of heaven, God pours down refreshing showers to quench and satisfy the thirsty earth! In this may I resemble them, and come amongst the people of the Lord, "in the fulness of the "blessing of the gospel of Christ," Rom. xv. 29. O let not those thirsty souls that wait for me as for the rain, Job xxix. 23. "return "like the troops of Tema, ashamed, with their heads covered," Job vi. 19. O that my lips might refresh many! Let me never be like those empty clouds, which deceive the hopes of thirsty souls; but let my doctrine descend as the rain, and distil as the dew, and let that plot of thine inheritance which thou hast assigned to me, be as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

3. Once more, lift up thine eyes to the clouds, and behold, to how great an height the sun hath mounted them, for by reason of their sublimity it is that they are called the clouds of heaven, Matth. xxiv. 30. Lord, let me be a cloud of heaven too: Let my heart and conversation be both there! Who is more advantaged for an heavenly life than I? heavenly truths are the subjects of my daily study, and shall earthly things be the objects of my daily delights and loves? God forbid that ever my earthly conversation should contradict and shame my heavenly calling and profession. Shine forth thou glorious sun of righteousness, and my heart shall quickly be attracted and mounted above these visible clouds, yea, and above the aspectable heavens.

1. Is the gospel rain, and are its ministers clouds? Woe is me then, that my habitation is upon the mountains of Gilboa, where there are no dews! Ah sad lot, that I should be like Gideon's dry fleece, whilst the ground round about me is wet with the dew of heaven; O thou that commandest the clouds above, and openest the windows of heaven, remember and refresh this parched wilderness,

Three reflections for private Christians.

For those that want a gospel-ministry.

wherein I live with showers of grace, that we may not be as the heath in the desart, which seeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the wilderness.

For those that enjoy a gospel-ministry.

2. O Lord, thou hast caused the heavens above me to be black with clouds, thou openest the celestial casements from above, and daily sendest down showers of gospel-blessings: O that I might be as the parched earth under them! Not for barrenness, but for thirstiness. Let me say, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the "courts of the Lord:" that I might there see the beauty of the Lord. Doth the spungy earth so greedily suck up the showers, and open as many mouths as there are clefts in it, to receive what the clouds dispense? And shall those precious soul-enriching showers fleet away unprofitably from me? If so, then,

For unprofitable hearers.

5. What an account have I to make for all those gospel-blessings that I have enjoyed; for all those gospel-dews and showers wherewith I have been watered! Should I be found fruitless at last, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated wilderness than with me; more tolerable for Indians and Barbarians that never heard the gospel, than for me that have been so assiduously and plentifully watered by it. Lord! what a difference wilt thou put in the great day betwixt simple and pertinacious barrenness? Surely, if my root be not rottenness, such heavenly waterings and influences as these will make it sprout forth into fruits of obedience.

THE POEM.

THE vegetables here below depend
Upon those treasures which the heavens do spend
Most bounteously upon them, to preserve
Their being and their beauty. This may serve
To shadow forth a heavenly mystery,
Which thus presents itself before your eye.
As when the sun draws near us in the spring,
All creatures do rejoice, birds chirp and sing.
The face of nature smiles; the fields adorn
Themselves with rich embroideries: The corn
Revives, and shooteth up; the warm sweet rain
Makes trees and herbs sprout forth, and spring amain.
Walk but the fields in such a fragrant morn,
How do the birds your ears with music charm!
The flowers their flaming beauties do present
Unto your captiv'd eyes; and for their scent,
The sweet Arabian gums cannot compare,
Which thus perfume circumambient air.
So when the gospel sheds its cheering beams
On gracious souls, like those sweet-warming gleams

Which God ordains in nature, to draw forth
The virtue seminal that's in the earth;
It warms their hearts, their languid graces cheers,
And on such souls a spring-like face appears.
The gracious showers these spiritual clouds do yield,
Enriches them with sweetness, like a field
Which God hath bless'd. Oh! 'tis exceeding sweet,
When gracious hearts and heavenly truths do meet!
How should the hearts of saints within them spring,
When they behold the messengers that bring
These gladsome tidings? Yea, their very feet
Are beautiful, because their message's sweet.
Oh what a mercy does those souls enjoy,
On whom such gospel-dews fall day by day!
Thrice happy land! which in this pleasant spring,
Can hear these turtles in her hedges sing?
O prize such mercies! If you ask me, why?
Read on, you'll see there's reason by and by.

CHAP. X.

Upon a Dearth through want of Rain.

If God restrains the show'rs, you howl and cry:
Shall saints not mourn when spiritual clouds are dry?

OBSERVATION.

IT is deservedly accounted a sad judgment, when God shuts up the heavens over our heads, and makes the earth as brass under our feet, Deut. xxviii. 23. Then the husbandmen are called to mourning, Joel i. 11. All the fields do languish, and the bellowing cattle are pined with thirst. Such a sad state the prophet rhetorically describes, Jer. xiv. 3, 4, 5, 6. "The nobles have sent their little ones "to the waters; they came to the pits and found no water; they "returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and con- "founded, and covered their heads, because the ground is chapt; "for there was no rain in the earth; the plowmen were ashamed, "they covered their heads; yea, the hind also calved in the field, "and forsook it, because there was no grass; and the wild asses did "stand in the high places: They snuffed up the wind like dragons; "their eyes failed because there was no grass."

And that which makes the want of rain so terrible a judgment, is the famine of bread, which necessarily follows these extraordinary droughts, and is one of the sorest temporal judgments which God inflicts upon the world.

APPLICATION.

AND, truly as much cause have they to weep and tremble over whose souls God shuts up the spiritual clouds of the gospel, and thereby sends a spiritual famine upon their souls. Such a judgment the Lord threatens in Amos viii. 11. "Behold the day is come, "saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine "of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the "Lord." The meaning is, I will send a more fearful judgment than that of the famine of bread; for this particle [not] is not *exclusive* but *excessive;* implying, that a famine of bread is nothing, or but a light judgment compared with the famine of the word. Parallel to which is that text, Isa. v. 6. "I will lay it waste (saith God of the fruitless "church;) it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come "up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they "rain not upon it." And we find both in human and sacred histories, that when God hath shut up the spiritual clouds, removing or silencing his minister, sensible Christians have ever been deeply affected with it, and reckoned it a most tremendous judgment. Thus the Christians of Antioch, when Chrysostom their minister was banished, * they judged it better to lose the sun out of the firmament, than lose that, their minister. And when Nazianzen was taking his leave of Constantinople, as he was preaching his *farewell sermon*, the people were exceedingly affected with his loss; and among the rest, an old man in the congregation fell into a bitter passion, and cried out, *Aude pater, et tecum trinitatem ipsam ejice:* i. e. Go, Father, if you dare, and take away the whole trinity with you; meaning, that God would not stay when he was gone. How did the Christians of Antioch also weep and lament, when Paul was taking his farewell of them? Acts xx. 37, 38. He had been a cloud of blessings to that place; but now they must expect no more showers from him. Oh! they knew not how to give up such a minister! when the ark of God (which was the symbol of the Divine presence among the Jews) was taken, "All the city cried out," 1 Sam. iv. 13. Oh the loss of a gospel-ministry is an inestimable loss, not to be repaired but by its own return, or by heaven! Mr. Greenham tells us, that in the times of popish persecution, when godly ministers were haled away from their flocks to *martyrdom*, the poor Christians would meet them in the way to the prison, or stake, with their little ones in their arms, and throwing themselves at their feet, would thus bespeak them, 'What shall be our estate, now you are gone to *martyrdom?* Who 'shall instruct these poor babes? Who shall ease our afflicted con-'sciences? Who shall lead us in the way of life? Recompense unto 'them, O Lord, as they have deserved, who are the causes of this: 'Lord, give them sad hearts.' *Quis talia fando, temperet a lachrymis?*

* It is better for us to want the light of the sun, than the teaching of Chrysostom.

And to let you see there is sufficient ground for this sorrow, when God restrains the influences of the gospel, solemnly consider the following particulars.

1. That it is a dreadful token of God's great anger against that people from whom he removes the gospel. The anger of God was fearfully incensed against the church of Ephesus, when he did but threaten to come against her, and remove the candlestick out of its place, Rev. ii. 5. It is a stroke at the soul, a blow at the root; usually the last, and therefore the worst of judgments. There is a pedigree of judgments; first Gomer bears Jezreel; next Lo-ruhama, and at last brings forth Lo-ammi, Hosea i. 4, 6, 8, 9.

2. There is cause of mourning, if you consider the deplorable estate in which all the unregenerate souls are left, after the gospel is removed from them. What will become of these? Or by whom shall they be gathered? It made the bowels of Christ yern within him, when he lookod upon the scattered multitude that had no shepherd, Matth. ix. 36. What an easy conquest doth the devil now make of them! How fast doth hell fill in such times! Poor souls being driven thither in droves, and none to rescue them! Matthew Paris tells us, that in the year 1073, when preaching was suppressed at Rome, letters were then framed as coming from hell, wherein the devil gave them thanks for the multitude of souls they had sent to him that year. But truly we need not talk of letters from hell, we are told from heaven, how deplorable the condition of such poor souls is; See Prov. xxviii. 19. Hos. iv. 6. Or,

3. The judgment will yet appear very heavy, if you consider the loss which God's own people sustain by the removal of the gospel; for therein they lose, (1.) Their chief glory, Rom. iii. 2. The principal thing in which the peculiar glory of Israel consisted was this, "That unto them were committed the oracles of God." On that account it was called the glorious land, Dan. xi. 16. This made them greater than all the nations round about them, Deut. iv. 7, 8. (2.) By losing the ordinances they lose their quickenings, comforts, and soul-refreshments: for all these are sweet streams from the gospel-fountain, Psalm cxix. 50. Col. iv. 8. No wonder then to hear the people of God complain of dead hearts when the gospel is removed. (3.) In the loss of the gospel they lose their defence and safety. This is their hedge, their wall of protection, Isa. v. 5. Walls and hedges (saith *Musculus in loc.*) are the ordinances of God, which served both *ad separationem et munitionem*, to distinguish and to defend them. When God plucks up this hedge and breaks down this wall, all mischiefs break in upon us presently, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6. "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, "and without a teaching priest, and without law.———And in "those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him

" that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of " the countries, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of " city; for God did vex them with all adversity." How long did Jerusalem remain after that voice was heard in the temple, *Migremus hinc?* Let us be gone. (4.) With the gospel, we lose our temporal enjoyments and creature-comforts. These usually come and go with the gospel. When God had once written *Lo-ammi* upon Israel, the next news was this, " I will recover my wool and my flax," Hosea ii. 9. (5.) And, lastly, to come up to the very case in hand, they lose with it their spiritual food and soul-subsistence, for the gospel is their *feast of fat things*, Isa. xxv. 6. their spiritual wells, Isa. xii. 3. a dole distributed among the Lord's poor, Rom. i. 11. In a word, it is as the rain and dews of heaven, as hath been shewed, which being restrained, a spiritual famine necessarily follows, a famine of all the most terrible. Now to shew you the analogy between this and a temporal famine, that therein you may see what cause you have to be deeply affected with it, take it in these six following particulars.

1. A famine caused by the failing of bread, or that which is in the stead, and hath the use of bread. Dainties and superfluous rarities may fail, and yet men may subsist comfortably. As long as people have bread and water, they will not famish; but take away bread once, and the spirit of man faileth. Upon this account bread is called a staff, Psal. cv. 16. because what a staff is to an aged and feeble man, that bread is to the faint and feeble spirits, which even so lean upon it. And look what bread is to the natural spirits, that, and more than that, the word is to gracious spirits, Job xxiii. 12. " I have " esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food." If once God break this staff, the inner-man, that hidden man of the heart, will quickly begin to fail and faulter.

2. It is not every degree or scarcity of bread that presently makes a famine, but a general failing of it; when no bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no nutriment. (For a famine may as well be occasioned by God's taking away *panis nutrimentum*, the nourishing virtue of bread, that it shall signify no more, as to the end of bread, than a chip, Hag. i. 6. as by taking away *panem nutrientem*, bread itself, Isa. iii. 1.) And so it is in a spiritual famine, which is occasioned, either by God's removing all the ordinances, and making vision utterly to fail; or else, though there be preaching, prayer, and other ordinances left, (at least the names and shadows of them) yet the presence of God is not with them. There is no marrow in the bone, no milk in the breast; and so, as to soul-subsistence, it is all one, as if there were no such things.

3. In a corporeal famine, mean and coarse things become sweet and pleasant. Famine raises the price and esteem of them. That which before you would have thrown to your dogs, now goes down pleasantly with yourselves. To the hungry soul every bitter thing is

sweet, Prov. xxvii. 7. It is the Dutch proverb, and a very true one, *Hunger is the best cook* *.

'In time of famine coarsest fare contents,
'The barking stomach strains complements.'

It is storied of Artaxerxes Memnon, that when he was flying before his enemies, he fed hungrily upon barley-bread, and said, *Cujusmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fui!* O what pleasure have I hitherto been ignorant of! When great Darius drank the puddled water, that had been defiled with dead carcases, which had been slain in that famous battle, he professed he never drank more pleasant drink. And famous Hunniades said, he never fared more daintily, than when (in a like exigence,) he supped upon bread, onions, and water, with a poor shepherd in his cottage.

Just so doth the famine of the word raise the price and esteem of vulgar and despised truths. Oh! what would you give for one of those sermons, one of those sabbaths we formerly enjoyed! *In those days the word of the Lord was precious.* When God calls to the enemy to take away and remove his contemned, but precious dainties, from his wanton children, and a spiritual famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their spiritual food at a higher rate.

4. In time of famine some persons suffer more than others: it falls heaviest, and pincheth hardest upon the poorer sort; as long as any thing is to be had for money, the rich will have it. So it falls out in a spiritual famine; although the most experienced and best furnished Christians will have enough to do to live in the absence of ordinances, yet they are like to subsist much better than weak, ignorant, and unexperienced ones. Some Christians have husbanded their time well, and, like Joseph in the seven years *plenty*, *laid* up for a *scarcity*. The word of God dwells richly in them. Some such there are, as John calls young men, who are strong, and the word of God remaineth in them; of whom it may be said, as Jerom spake of Nepotianus, that by long and assiduous meditation of the scriptures, he had made his breast the very library of Christ. But others are babes in Christ; and though God will preserve that good work which he hath begun in them, yet these poor babes will soonest find, and be most concerned in the loss of their spiritual fathers and nurses.

5. In time of famine there are pitiful cries, and heart-breaking complaints wherever you go. Oh the many pale faces you shall then see, and the sad language that rings in your ears in every place! One cries, Bread, bread, for Christ's sake! one bit of bread! another faints and falls down at your door. *All her people sigh*, Lam. i. 11. Yea, the poor little ones are brought in, ver. 12. crying to their mothers, Where is the corn and wine? and then pouring out their

* *Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit.* Horat.

souls into their mother's bosom. Just so it is in a famine of the word; poor Christians every where sighing and crying, Oh! where are our godly ministers? our sweet sabbaths, sermons, sacraments? My fathers! my fathers! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! How beautiful were your feet upon the mountains? And then, weeping, like the people at Paul's *departure*, to think they shall see their faces no more.

6. Lastly, In time of famine there is nothing so costly or precious, but the people will part with it to purchase bread. "They have "given their pleasant things for meat to relieve their souls," Lam. i. 11. And, doubtless, when a spiritual famine shall pinch hard, those that have been close-handed to maintain a gospel-ministry, will account it a choice mercy to enjoy them again at any rate. "Though "the Lord feed you with the bread of affliction, and give you the "waters of adversity; yet it will sweeten that bread and water to "you, if your teachers be no more removed into corners," Isa. xxx. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

The ungrateful soul's reflection.

2. Is the famine of the word such a fearful judgment? Then Lord pardon my unthankfulness, for the plentiful and long-continued enjoyment of such a precious and invaluable mercy. How long lightly have I esteemed the great things of the gospel! O that with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, I might bless the Lord that ever I was brought forth in an age of so much light, in a valley of visions, in a land flowing with gospel-mercies! "Hath not God made of one blood all the nations of "men to dwell on the face of the earth? And determined the times "before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation?" Acts xvii. 26. Many of these great and populous nations are involved in gross darkness. Now that of all the several ages of the world, and places in it, God should espy the best place for me, and bring me forth in it, in such a happy nick of time, as can hardly be paralleled in history for the plenty of gospel-mercies that this age and nation hath enjoyed; that my mother did not bring me forth in the deserts of Arabia, or wastes of America, but in England, where God hath made the sun of the gospel to stand still, as the natural sun once did over Gibeon; and that such a mercy should no more affect my soul, let shame cover my face for this, and trembling seize my heart!

The deprived Christian's reflection.

2. Is the gospel indeed departed? Its sweet influences restrained? and a famine, worse than that of bread, come upon us? *Alas for the day! for it is a great day, so that none is like it; it is even the day of Jacob's trouble!* Woe is me, that ever I should survive the gospel, and the precious liberties and mercies of it! What horrid sins have been harboured amongst us, for which the Lord contends by such an unparalleled judgment? Lord, let me justify thee, even in

this severe dispensation; the provocation of thy sons and of thy daughters have been very great, and amongst them none greater than mine. May we not this day read our sin in our punishment? O what nice and wanton appetites, what curious and itching ears had thy people in the days of plenty! Methods, tones, and gestures were more regarded than the excellent treasures of divine truths. Ah, my soul! I remember my fault this day; little did I then consider, that sermons work not upon hearts, as they are thus elegant, thus admirable, but as they are instruments in the hand of God appointed to such an end. Even as Austin said of the conduits of water, though one be in the shape of an angel, another of a beast, yet the water refreshes as it is water, and not as it comes from such a conduit: by this also O Lord, thou rebukest the supineness and formality of thy people. How drowsy, dull, and careless have they been under the most excellent and quickening means? Few more than I. Alas! I have often presented my body before the Lord in ordinances, η ρε ψυχη εξω, but my soul hath been wandering abroad, as Chrysostom speaks. I should have come from under every sermon, as a sheet comes from the press, with all the stamps and lively impressions of the truths I have heard upon my heart. But alas! if it had been demanded of me, as once it was of Aristotle, after a long and curious oration, how he liked it? I might have answered, as he did, truly I did not hear it, for I was all the while minding another matter. Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all that is come upon us!

The silent minister's reflection.

3. I am now as a spring shut up, that can yield no refreshment to thirsty souls, ready to perish. Thou hast said to me as once to Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold, I will "make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, "and thou shalt be dumb." This is a very heavy judgment; but thou must be justified and cleared in it. Although men may not, yet God, if he please, may put a lighted candle under a bushel. And herein I must acknowledge thy righteousness. Many times have I been sinfully silent, when both thy glory and the interest of souls engaged me to speak. Most justly therefore hast thou made my tongue to cleave to its roof. Little did I consider the preciousness of souls, or the tremendous account to be given for them, at the appearing of the great Shepherd. I have now time enough to sit down and mourn over former miscarriages and lost opportunities. Lord, restore me once again to a serviceable capacity, to a larger sphere of activity for thee, for I am now become as a broken vessel. It grieves me to the heart to see thy flock scattered; to hear the people cry to me, as once to Joseph, "Give us bread; for why should we die in "thy presence?" The word is like fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing. Oh! that thou wouldst once again open the doors of thine house, that there may be bread enough in thine house for all thy children.

THE POEM.

WHEN God doth make the heavens above as brass,
The earth's like iron; flowers, herbs and grass
Have lost their fragrant green, are turned yellow;
The brooks are dry, the pining cattle bellow;
The fat and flow'ry meadows scorch'd and burn'd;
The country's mirth is into mourning turn'd;
The clefted earth her thirsty mouth sets ope
Unto the empty clouds, as 'twere in hope
Of some refreshing drops, that might allay
Her fiery thirst: but they soon pass away;
The pensive husbandman with his own eyes
Bedews his land, because he sees the skies
Refuse to do it. Just so stands the case,
When God from souls removes the means of grace.
God's ministers are clouds, their doctrine rain,
Which when the Lord in judgment shall restrain,
The people's souls in short time will be found
In such a case as this dry parched ground.
When this sad judgment falls on any nation,
Let saints therein take up this lamentation.

O dreadful, dark, and dismal day!
How is our glory fled away?
Our sun gone down, our stars o'ercast?
God's heritage is now laid waste.

Our pining souls no bread can get;
With wantons God has justly met.
When we were fed unto the full,
This man was tedious, that was dull:
But they are gone, and there remain
No such occasions to complain.
Stars are not now for lights, but signs,
God knows of what heart-breaking times.
Sure heaven intends not peace, but wars,
In calling home ambassadors.
How long did Sodom's judgment stay,
When righteous Lot was snatch'd away?
How long remain'd that stately hall,
When Samson made the pillars fall?
When horsemen and commanders fly,
Woe to the helpless infantry.
This is a sad and fatal blow,
A public loss and overthrow.
You that so long have wish'd them gone,
Be quiet now, the thing is done:
Did they torment you e're your day?

God hath remov'd them out o' th' way.
Now sleep in sin, and take your ease;
Their doctrine shall no more displease.
But, Lord! what shall become of us?
Our teacher's gone, and left us thus:
To whom shall we ourselves address,
When conscience labours in distress?
Oh! who shall help us out at need?
Or pour in balm when wounds do bleed?
Help, Lord! for unto thee our eyes
Do pour our tears; our groans, our cries
Shall never cease, 'till thou restore
The mercies which we had before;
'Till Sion's paths, where grass now grows,
Be trodden by the feet of those
That love thy name, and long t' enjoy
The mercies they have sinn'd away.

CHAP. XI.

Upon the Corruption of the Seed before it springs.

Seeds die and rot, and then must fresh appear;
Saints' bodies rise more orient than they were.

OBSERVATION.

AFTFR the seed is committed to the earth, it seems to perish and die, as our Saviour speaks, John xii. 24. "Except a corn of "wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, "it brings forth much fruit." The death of the corn in the earth is not a total death, but only the corruption or alteration of it: for if once the seminal life and virtue of it were quite extinguished, it could neither put forth blade or ear without a miracle. Yet because that alteration is a kind of death, therefore Christ here uses it as a fit illustration of the resurrection. And indeed there is nothing in nature more apt to illustrate that great mystery. What a fragrant, green and beautiful blade do we see spring up from a corrupted seed? How black and mouldy is that! How beautiful and verdant is this?

APPLICATION.

EVEN thus shall the bodies of the saints arise in beauty and glory at the resurrection: "They are sown in dishonour; they "are raised in glory; they are sown natural bodies; they are raised "spiritual bodies," 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. The husbandman knows,

that though the seed rot in the earth, yet it will rise again. And the believer knows, "that though after his skin worms destroy his "body, yet in his flesh he shall see God," Job xix. 25, &c. And the resemblance betwixt the seed sown, and springing up; and the bodies of the saints dying and rising again, lies in these following particulars.

1. The seed is committed to the earth from whence it came; so is the body of a saint; earth it was, and to earth it is again resolved. Grace exempts not the body of the best man from seeing corruption, Rom. viii. 10. Though Christ be in him, yet the body is dead; that is, sentenced to death because of sin, Heb. ix. 27. "But it is "appointed for all men once to die."

2. The seed is cast into the earth in hope, 1 Cor. ix. 10. Were there not a resurrection of it expected, the husbandman would never be willing to cast away his corn. The bodies of saints are also committed to the grave in hope, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not "have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those which are "asleep, as they which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus "died, and rose again, so even also them which sleep in Jesus, "shall the Lord bring with him." This blessed hope of a resurrection sweetens not only the troubles of life, but the pangs of death.

3. The seed is cast into the earth seasonably, in its proper season: so are the bodies of the saints, Job v. 26. "Thou shall come to thy "grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season." They always die in the fittest time, though sometimes they seem to die immaturely: the time of their death was from all eternity prefixed by God, beyond which they cannot go, and short of which they cannot come.

4. The seed lies many days and nights under the clods, before it rise and appear again: "even so man lieth down, and riseth not "again until the heavens be no more," Job xiv. 12. The days of darkness in the grave are many.

5. When the time is come for its shooting up, the earth that covered it can hide it no longer; it cannot keep it down a day more; it will find or make way through the clods. So in that day when the great trump shall sound, bone shall come to its bone, and the grave shall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both sea and earth must render the dead that are in them, Rev. xx. 13.

6. When the seed appears above-ground, it appears much more fresh and orient, than when it was cast into the earth: God clothes it with such beauty, that it is not like to what it was before. Thus rise the bodies of the saints, marvellously improved, beautified, and perfected with spiritual qualities and rich endowments; in respect whereof they are called spiritual bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 43. not properly but analogically spiritual; for look, as spirits subsist with-

out food, raiment, sleep, know no lassitude, weariness or pain; so our bodies, after the resurrection, shall be above these necessities and distempers; for we shall be as the angels of God, Matth. xxii. 30. Yea, our vile bodies shall be changed, and made like unto Christ's glorious body; which is the highest pitch and ascent of glory and honour that an human body is capable of, Phil. iii. 21. Indeed, the glory of the soul shall be the greatest glory; that is the orient invaluable gem: But God will bestow a distinct glory upon the body, and richly enamel the very case in which that precious jewel shall be kept. In that glorious morning of the resurrection, the saints shall put on their new fresh suits of flesh, richly laid and trimmed with glory. Those bodies, which in the grave were but dust and rottenness, when it delivers them back again, shall be shining and excellent pieces, absolutely and everlastingly freed. (1.) From all natural infirmities and distempers: Death is their good physician, which at once freed them of all diseases. It is a great affliction now to many of the Lord's people, to be clogged with so many bodily infirmities, which render them very unserviceable to God. *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* A crazy body retorts and shoots back its distempers upon the soul, with which it is so closely conjoined: But though now the soul (as Theophrastus speaks) pays a dear rent for the tabernacle in which it dwells; yet, when death dissolves that tabernacle, all the diseases and pains, under which it groaned, shall be buried in the rubbish of its mortality; and when they come to be re-united again, God will bestow rich gifts and dowries, even upon the body, in the day of its re-espousals to the soul. (2.) It shall be freed from all deformities; there are no breaches, flaws, monstrosities in glorified bodies; but of them it may much rather be said what was once said of Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. "That from the crown of "the head to the sole of his foot, there was no blemish in him." (3.) It shall be freed from all natural necessities, to which it is now subjected in this its animal state. How is the soul now disquieted and tortured with cares and troubles to provide for a perishing body? Many unbelieving and unbecoming fears it is now vexed with: What shall it eat? And what shall it drink? And wherewithal shall it be clothed? "But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; God "shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13. i. e. as to their present use and office; for as to its existence, so the belly shall not be destroyed. But even as the masts, poop and stern of a ship abide in the harbour after the voyage is ended, so shall these bodily members, as Tertullian excellently illustrates it. (4.) They shall be freed from death, to which thenceforth they can be subject no more; that formidable adversary of nature shall assault it no more. "For they "which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the re-"surrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; "neither can they die any more; for they shall be equal to the an-

"gels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resur-
"rection," Luke xx. 35, 36. Mark it (equal to the angels) not that they shall be separate and single spirits, without bodies as the angels are: but equal to them in the way and manner of their living and acting.* We shall then live upon God, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for God; for all kind of living upon, and delighting in creatures, seems in that text (by a synecdoche of the part which is ordinarily in scripture put for all creature-delights, dependencies, and necessities) to be excluded. Nothing but God shall enamour and fill the soul; and the body shall be perfectly subdued to the spirit. Lord, what hast thou prepared for them that love thee!

REFLECTIONS.

The healthful saint's reflection.

1. If I shall receive my body again so dignified and improved in the world to come, then Lord let me never be unwilling to use my body now for the interest of thy glory, or my own salvation! Now, O my God, it grieves me to think how many precious opportunities of serving and honouring thee I have lost, under pretence of endangering my health!

I have been more solicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live usefully and fruitfully; and, like enough, my life had been more serviceable to thee, if it had not been so fondly overvalued by me.

Foolish soul! hath God given thee a body for a living tool or instrument? And art thou afraid to use it? Wherein is the mercy of having a body, if not in spending and wearing it out in the service of God? To have an active vigorous body, and not to employ and exercise it for God, for fear of endangering its health, is, as if one should give thee a handsome and sprightly horse, upon condition thou shouldst not ride or work him. O! if some of the saints had enjoyed the blessings of such an healthy active body as mine, what excellent services would they have performed to God in it?

The sickly saint's reflection.

2. If my body shall as surely rise again in glory, vigour, and excellent endowments, as the seed which I sow doth; why should not this comfort me over all the pains, weaknesses, and dulness, with which my soul is now clogged? Thou knowest, my God, what a grief it hath been to my soul, to be fettered and entangled with the distempers and manifold indispositions of this vile body: It hath made me sigh, and say with holy Anselme, when he saw the mounting bird weighed down by the stone hanging at her leg, Lord, thus it fares with the soul of thy servant! Fain would I serve, glorify, and enjoy thee, but a distempered body will not let me. However, it is reviving to think, that though I am now forced to crawl like a

* Ισαγγελωςβ ιωνΙες.

worm, in the discharge of my duties, I shall shortly fly, like a seraphim in the execution of thy will. Cheer up, drooping soul; the time is at hand when thou shalt be made more willing than thou art, and thy flesh not so weak as now it is.

The dying saint's reflection.

3. And is it so indeed? Then let the dying saint, like Jacob, rouse up himself upon his bed, and encourage himself against the fears of death by this refreshing consideration. Let him say with holy dying Musculus, why tremblest thou, O my soul, to go forth of this tabernacle to the land of rest? Hath thy body been such a pleasant habitation to thee, that thou shouldest be so loth to part with it, though but for a time, and with assurance of receiving it again with such a glorious improvement? I know, O my soul, that thou hast a natural inclination to this body, resulting from the dear and strict union which God himself hath made betwixt thee and it; yea, even the holiest of men do sometimes sensibly feel the like in themselves; but beware thou love it not immoderately or inordinately; it is but a creature, how dear soever it be to thee; yea, a fading creature, and that which now stands in thy way to the full enjoyment of God. But say, my soul, why are the thoughts of parting with it so burdensome to thee? Why so loth to take death by its cold hand? Is this body thy old and dear friend? True, but yet thou partest not with it upon such sad terms as should deserve a tear at parting. For mayest thou not say of this departure, as Paul at the departure of Onesimus? Philem. ver. 15. "It therefore departeth for a season, that thou mayest receive it for "ever." The day of re-espousals will quickly come; and in the mean time, as thy body shall not be sensible of the tedious length of interposing time, so neither shalt thou be solicitous about thine absent friend; for the fruition of God in thine unbodied state, shall fill thee with infinite satisfaction and rest.

Or is it not so much simply for parting with it, as for the manner of thy parting, either by the slow and lingering approaches of a natural, or the quick and terrible approaches of a violent death: Why, trouble not thyself about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark lane of a tedious sickness, yet at the end of it is thy Father's house. And for a violent death, it is not so material whether friends or enemies stand weeping or triumphing over thy dead body. *Nihil corpus sensit in nervo cum anima sit in cælo.* When thy soul shall be in heaven, it will not be sensible how the body is used on earth.

The ungodly soul's reflection.

4. But oh! what an uncomfortable parting will mine be! and how much more sad our meeting again! how will this soul and body blush, yea, tremble when they meet, who have been co-partners in so much guilt? I damned my soul to please my flesh, and now have ruined both thereby: Had I denied my flesh to serve Christ, worn out my body in the service of my soul, I had thereby happily provi-

ded for them both; but I began at the wrong end, and so have ruined both eternally.

THE POEM.

BARE seeds have no great beauty, but, inhum'd,
That which they had is lost, and quite consum'd;
They soon corrupt and grow more base, by odds,
When dead and bury'd underneath the clods:
It falls in baseness, but at length doth rise
In glory which delights beholders' eyes.
How great a difference have a few days made,
Betwixt it in the bushel and the blade!
This lovely, lively emblem aptly may
Type out the glorious resurrection-day;
Wherein the saints that in the dust do lie,
Shall rise in glory, vigour, dignity;
With singing, in that morning they arise,
And dazzle glory, such as mortal eyes
Ne'er view'd on earth. The sparkling beauties here,
No more can equalize their splendor there,
Than glimmering glow-worms do the fairest star
That shines in heaven, or the stones that are
In ev'ry street, may competition hold
With glittering diamonds in rings of gold.
For unto Christ's most glorious body they
Shall be conform'd in glory at that day;
Whose lustre would, should it on mortals fall,
Transport a Stephen, and confound a Paul.
'Tis now a coarse and crazy house of clay;
But, oh! how dear do souls for lodgings pay!
Few more than I: For thou, my soul, hast been
Within these tents of Kedar cooped in;
Where, with distempers clogg'd, thou mak'st thy moans,
And, for deliverance, with tears and groans
Hast often su'd: Cheer up, the time will be
When thou from all these troubles shall be free:
No jarring humours, cloudy vapours, rheums,
Pains, aches, or whatever else consumes
My day in grief; whilst in the Christian race,
Flesh lags behind, and can't keep equal pace
With the more willing spirit: None of these
Shall thenceforth clog thee, or disturb thine ease,

CHAP. XII.

Upon the Resemblance of Wheat and Tares.

As wheat resembled is by viler tares;
So vile hypocrisy like grace appears.

OBSERVATION.

IT is Jerom's observation, that wheat and tares are so much alike in their first springing up, that it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish the one from the other: These are his words, *Inter triticum et lolium quandiu herba est, et nondum culmus venit ad spicam; grandis similitudo est; et indiscernendo aut nulla, aut per difficilis distantia.* The difference (saith he) between them, is either none at all, or wonderfully difficult to discern, which those words of Christ, Mat. xiii. 30. plainly confirm. Let them both alone till the harvest; thereby intimating both the difficulty of distinguishing the tares and wheat; as also the unwarrantable rashness of bold and hasty censures of men's sincerity or hypocrisy, which is there shadowed by them.

APPLICATION.

HOW difficult soever it be to discern the difference betwixt wheat and tares, yet, doubtless, the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference betwixt special and common grace; for all saving graces in the saints have their counterfeits in hypocrites. There are *similar works* in these, which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily mistake for the *saving and genuine effects* of the sanctifying Spirit.

Doth the Spirit of God convince the consciences of his people of the evil of sin? Rom. vii. 9. Hypocrites have their convictions too, Exod. x. 16. "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; "and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against "you." Thus was Saul also convicted, 1 Sam. xv. 24.

Doth true conviction and compunction work reformation of life in the people of God? Even hypocrites also have been famous for their reformations. The unclean spirit often goes out of the formal hypocrite, by an external reformation; and yet still retains his propriety in them, Matth. xii. 43, 44. For that departure is indeed no more than a politic retreat. Many that shall never escape the damnation of hell, have yet escaped the pollutions of the world, and that by the knowledge of the Son of God, 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Doth the Spirit of the Lord produce that glorious and supernatural work of faith in convinced and humbled souls? In this also the hypocrite apes and imitates the believer, Acts viii. 13. "Then Simon

"himself believed also." Luke viii. 13. "These are they which "for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

Doth the precious eye of faith, discovering the transcendent excellencies that are in Christ, enflame the affections of the believing soul with vehement desires and longings after him? Strange motions of heart have also been found in hypocrites towards Christ and heavenly things. John vi. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread, Matth. xxv. 8. "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." With what a rapture was Balaam transported, when he said, "Let me die "the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his!" Numb. xxiii. 10.

Doth the work of faith, in some believers, bear upon its top branches the full ripe fruit of a blessed assurance? Lo! what strong confidences and high-built persuasions of an interest in God, have sometimes been found even in unsanctified ones? John viii. 54. "Of "whom you say, that he is your God; and yet ye have not known "him." To the same height of confidence arrived those vain souls mentioned in Rom. ii. 19. Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment-seat of God, and there defend it, Mat. vii. 22. "Lord, Lord, have we not pro- "phesied in thy name?"

Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable and full of glory, giving them, *through faith*, a prelibation, or foretaste of heaven itself, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes that which the apostle supposes may be found even in *apostates*, Heb. vi. 8, 9. who are there said "to taste the good word "of God, and the powers of the world to come." What shall I say, if real Christians delight in ordinances, those that are none may also delight in approaching to God, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. It may be you will say, though the difference be not easily discernible in their active obedience, yet, when it shall come to suffering, there every eye may discern it; the false heart will then flinch, and cannot brook that work. And yet even this is no infallible rule neither; for the apostle supposes, that the *salamander* of hypocrisy may live in the very flames of martyrdom, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. "If I give my body to be burnt, "and have not charity." And it was long since determined in this case, *Non pœna, sed causa facit martyrem*; so, that without controversy, the difficulty of distinguishing them is very great.

And this difference will yet be more subtile and undiscernible, if I should tell you, that as in so many things the hypocrite resembles the saint; so there are other things in which a real Christian may act too like an hypocrite. When we find a Pharaoh confessing, an Herod practising, as well as hearing, a Judas preaching Christ, and an Alexander venturing his life for Paul; and, on the other side, shall find a David condemning that in another which he practised himself, an Hezekiah glorying in his riches, a Peter dissembling, and even all the disciples forsaking Christ in an hour of trouble and danger: O

then! how hard is it for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat? How many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear? How many false hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily have no clear convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which, at most, can beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright; or, on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, it is no great wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter. But though man cannot, the Lord both can and will, perfectly discriminate them. "The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. He will have a day perfectly to sever the tares from the wheat, to melt off the varnish of the most resplendent and refined hypocrite, and to blow off the ashes of infirmities, which have covered and obscured the very sparks of sincerity in his people: he will make such a division as was never yet made in the world, how many divisions soever there have been in it. "And then shall men indeed return, and discern between "the righteous and the wicked; betwixt him that serveth God, "and him that serveth him not." Meanwhile, my soul, thou canst not better employ thyself, whether thou be sound or unsound, than in making those reflections upon thyself.

REFLECTIONS.

The censorious soul's reflection.

And is this so? Then, Lord, pardon the rashness and precipitancy of my censorious spirit; for I have often boldy anticipated thy judgment, and assumed thy prerogative, although thou hast said, "Why dost thou judge thy brother? And why dost thou set at "nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat "of Christ. For it is written, As I live (saith the Lord) every knee "shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Let us "not therefore judge one another any more," Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12, 13. And again; "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Let us there-"fore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make mani-"fest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have "praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5.

What if God will own some of them for his sons, to whom I refuse to give the respect of brethren? I may pass hasty and headlong censures upon others; but where is my commission for so doing? I want not only a commission, but fit qualifications for such a work as this. Can I pierce into the heart as God? Can I infallibly discover the hidden motives, ends, and principles of actions? Besides, O my soul, thou art conscious of so much falseness in thyself, that were there no other consideration, that alone might restrain thee from all unchari-

table and hasty censures. If others knew but what I know of myself, would they not judge as severely of me as I do of others?

The presumptuous soul's reflection.

2. Though I may not judge the final state of another, yet I may, and ought to judge the state of my own soul; which is, doubtless, a more necessary and concerning work to me. For since every saving grace in a Christian hath its counterfeit in the hypocrite, how needful is it for thee, O my soul, to make a stand here, and solemnly to ponder this question, Whether those things, whereon I depend, as my best evidences for the life to come, be the real, or only the common works of the Spirit? Whether they may be such as can now endure the test of the word, and abide a fair trial at the bar of my own conscience?

Come then, my soul, set the Lord before thee, to whom the secrets of all hearts are manifest: and in the awful sense of that great day make true answer to these heart-discovering queries: For though thou canst not discern the difference betwixt these things in another, yet thou mayest and oughtest to discern it in thyself: For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him!

1. Is my obedience uniform? am I the same man at all times, places and companies? Or, rather, am I not exact and curious in open and public, remiss and careless in private and secret duties? Sincere souls are uniform souls, Psal. cxix. 6. the hypocrite is no closet-man, Matth. vi. 5.

2. Doth that which I call grace in me oppose and mortify, or doth it not rather quietly consist with, and protect my lusts and corruptions? True grace tolerates no lust, Gal. v. 17. No, not the bosom, darling corruptions, Psal. xviii. 23.

3. Doth that which I call my grace, humble, empty, and abase my soul? Or rather, doth it not puff it up with self-conceitedness? All saving grace is humbling grace, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But the soul which "is lifted up, is not upright," Hab. ii. 4.

Lastly, Canst thou, my soul, rejoice and bless God for the grace imparted to others? And rejoice if any design for Christ be carried on in the world by other hands? Or, rather, dost thou not envy those that excel thee, and carest for no work in which thou art not seen?

But stay, my soul, it is enough: If these be the substantial differences betwixt special and common grace, I more than doubt, I shall not endure the day of his coming, *Whose fan is in his hand.* Do not those spots appear upon me, which are not the spots of his children? Woe is me, poor wretch! the characters of death are upon my soul! Lord add power to the form, life to the name to live, practice to the knowledge, or I perish eternally! O rather give me the *saint's heart* than the *angel's tongue;* the poorest breathing of the Spirit than the richest ornaments of common gifts! Let me never deceive myself or others in matters of so deep and everlasting consequence.

THE POEM.

IN eastern countries, as good authors write,
Tares, in their springing up, appear to sight,
Not like itself, a weed, but real wheat;
Whose shape and form it counterfeits so neat,
That 'twould require a most judicious eye,
The one from t'other to diversify.
'Till both to some maturity be grown,
And then the difference is eas'ly known.
Even thus hypocrisy, that cursed weed,
Springs up so like true grace, that he will need
More than a common insight in this case,
That saith, this is not, that is real grace.
Ne'er did the cunning actor, tho' a slave
Array'd in princely robes, himself behave
So like a king, as this doth act the part
Of saving grace, by its deep hellish art.
Do gracious souls melt, mourn, and weep for sin?
The like in hypocrites observ'd hath been.
Have they their comforts, joys, and raptures sweet?
With them in comforts hypocrites do meet.
In all religious duties they can go
As far as saints, in some things farther too;
They speak like angels, and you'll think within,
The very spirit of Christ and grace hath been.
They come so near, that some, like Isaac, take
Jacob for Esau, this for that mistake:
And boldly call (their eyes, with his, being dim)
True grace, hypocrisy; and duty, sin:
Yea, many also, Jacob-like, embrace
Leah for Rachel, common gifts for grace:
And in their bosom hug it, 'till the light
Discover their mistake, and clear their sight:
And then, like him, confounded they will cry,
Alas! 'tis Leah, curs'd hypocrisy!
Guide me, my God, that I may not, instead
Of saving grace, nurse up this cursed weed.
O let my heart, at last, by thee be found
Sincere, and all thy workings on it sound!

CHAP. XIII.

Upon the Dangers incident to corn from Seed-time to Harvest.

Fowls, weeds, and blastings do your corn annoy,
Even so corruptions would your grace destroy.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are, amongst many others, three critical and dangerous periods between the seed-time and harvest. The first, when corn is newly committed to the earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly picked up by the birds; and much of that which is but slightly covered, is plucked up, as soon as it begins to sprout, by rooks, and other devouring fowls, Matth. xiii. 4. But if it escape the fowls, and gets root in the earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious weeds, which purloin and suck away its nourishment, whilst it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant husbandman it be freed from choaking weeds; yet, lastly, as great a danger as any of the former still attends it; for oftentimes, whilst it is blowing in the ear, blastings and mildews smite it in the stalk, and cuts off the juice and sap that should ascend to nourish the ear, and so shrivels and dries up the grain whilst it is yet immaturate; whereby it becomes like those ears of corn in Pharaoh's vision, which were thin and blasted with the east-wind; or like the ears the Psalmist speaks of upon the house top, wherewith the reaper filleth not his arms.

APPLICATION.

TRUE grace, from the infancy to the perfection thereof, conflicts with far greater dangers, amongst which it answerably meets with three dangerous periods which marvellously hazard it: So that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at its just perfection. For, (1.) No sooner hath the great Husbandman disseminated these holy seeds in the regenerate heart, but multitudes of impetuous corruptions immediately assault, and would certainly devour them, like the fowls of the air, did not the same arm that sowed them also protect them. It fares with grace, as with Christ its Author, whom Herod sought to destroy, in his very infancy. The new creature is scarce warm in its seat, before it must fight to defend itself. This conflict is excellently set forth in that famous text, Gal. v. 17. "The flesh lusteth against the "Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the "one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

By flesh here understand the corruption of nature by original sin, and the sinful motions thereof;—by Spirit, not the soul, or natural spirit of man, but the Spirit of God in man, viz. those graces in man which are the workmanship of the Spirit, and therefore called by his name. The opposition betwixt these two is expressed by lusting, i. e.

desiring the mutual ruin and destruction of each other; for even when they are not acting, yet then they are lusting; there is an opposite disposition against each other; which opposition is both a *formal* and an *effective* opposition. There are two contrary forms; two men in every saint, Col. iii. 9, 10. From hence an effective opposition must needs follow; for as things are in their natures and principles, so they are in their operations and effects; workings always follow beings; fire and water are of contrary qualities, and when they meet, they effectually oppose each other. Sin and grace are so opposite, that if sin should cease to oppose grace, it would cease to be sin; and if grace should cease to oppose sin, it would cease to be grace. And this doth much more endanger the work of grace than any other enemy it hath; because it works against it more *inwardly*, *constantly*, and *advantageously*, than any thing else can do. (1.) More inwardly, for it hath its being and working in the same soul where grace dwells; yea, in the self-same faculties; so that it not only sets one faculty against another, but the same faculty against itself; the understanding against the understanding, and the will against the will; so that ye cannot do the good, nor yet the evil that ye would; not the good that ye would, because when the spirit moveth to good, and beats upon the heart by Divine pulsations, exciting it to duty, the flesh crosses and opposes it there; and if it cannot totally hinder the performance of a duty, yet it lames the soul upon the working-hand, whereby the performance is not so spiritual, free and composed, as it desires; nor yet the evil that you would commit, if grace were not there; because when lust stirs, in its first motions, grace puts a rub in its way. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against "God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. And if it cannot (which for the most part it doth) hinder the acting of sin, yet it so engages the will against it, that it is not committed with complacency and full consent, Rom. vii. 15. "What I do, I allow not." (2.) It opposes it more constantly, it is like a continual dropping; a man can no more fly from this enemy, than from himself. There is a time when the devil leaves tempting, Mat. iv. 11. but no time when corruption ceases from working. And, lastly, It opposes grace more *advantageously* than any other enemy can do, for it is not only always in the same soul with it, but it is there naturally; it hath the advantage of the soil which suits with it. And yet, oh the wonder of free grace! it is not swallowed up in victory, but it escapes this hazard.

But (2.) It soon meets with another, though it escapes this, even by temptations, which strike desperately at the very life of it; for these, like the weeds, with seemingly-loving embraces, clasp about it; and did not the faithful God now make a way to escape, instead of an harvest, we should have an heap? For, alas, what are we! to wrestle with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednessess in high places?

Lastly, Sad relapses, like blasts and rustings, do often fade, and

greatly endanger it, when it is even ready for the harvest. Thus it fell out with David, whose last ways were not like his first; and yet by this these holy fruits were not utterly destroyed, because it is the seed of God, and so is immortal, 1 John v. 4, 5. And also because the promises of perseverance and victory made to it, cannot be frustrated; amongst which these are excellent, Isa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 40. 1 Cor. i. 8. Psal. i. 3. cxxv. 1. John iv. 15. So that here is matter of unspeakable comfort; though the flesh say, *Ego deficiam*, I will fail thee; though the world say, *Ego decipiam*, I will deceive thee; though the devil say, *Ego eripiam*, I will snatch thee away; yet as long as Christ saith, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, thy graces are secure in the midst of all these enemies.

REFLECTIONS.

The apostate's reflection.

1. This soul of mine was once plowed up by conviction, and sown (as I thought) with the seed of God. In those days many purposes and good resolutions began to chink and bud forth, promising a blessed harvest: but oh! (with what consternation and horror should I speak it) the cares and pleasures of this life, the lusts and corruptions of my base heart springing up, have quite destroyed and choaked it; by which it appears it was not the seed of God, as I then imagined it to be; and now my expected harvest shall be an heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow, Isa. xvii. 11. I had convictions, but they are gone; troubles for sin, conscience of duties, but all is blasted, and my soul is now as a barren field, which God hath cursed.

Woe is me! I have revolted from God, and now that dreadful word, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. is evidently fulfilled upon me; "for I am like "the heath in the desart, that seeth not when good cometh; my "soul inhabits the parched places of the wilderness." Alas! all my formal and heartless duties were but as so many scare-crows in the field, which could not defend these slight workings from being devoured by the infernal fowls. Had these principles been the seed of God, no doubt they would have continued and overcome the world, 1 John ii. 19. Wretched soul! thy case is sad; it will be better with the uncultivated wilderness, than with such a miscarrying soul, unless the great Husbandman plow thee up the second time, and sow thy heart with better seed.

The careless soul's reflection.

2. And are the corruptions of my heart to grace, what fowls, weeds, and mildews are to the corn? O what need have I then to watch my heart, and keep it with all diligence; for in the life of that grace is wrapt up the life of my soul. He that carries a candle in his hand, in a blustering stormy night, had need to cover it close, lest it be blown out, and he left in darkness. O let me never say, God hath promised it shall persevere, and therefore I need not be so solicitous to preserve it, for as this inference is quite opposite to the nature of true grace and assurance, which never encourage to

carelessness, but provoke the soul to an industrious use of means to preserve it; so it is in itself an irrational and senseless conclusion, which will never follow from any scripture-promise; for although it is readily granted, that God hath made many comfortable and sweet promises to the grace of his people, yet we must expect to enjoy the benefits and blessings of all those promises, in that way and order in which God hath promised them; and that is in the careful and diligent use of those means which he hath prescribed, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. For promises do not exclude, but imply the use of means, Acts xxvii. 31. I know my life is determined to a day, to an hour, and I shall live out every minute God hath appointed; but yet, I am bound to provide food, raiment, and physic to preserve it.

The doubting soul's reflection.

To conclude, let all doubting Christians reflect seriously upon this truth, and suck marrow and fatness out of it to strengthen and establish them against all their fears: your life, your spiritual life hath for many years hung in supense before you; and you have often said with David, I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul. Desponding, trembling soul! lift up thine eyes, and look upon the fields; the corn lives still, and grows up, though birds have watched to devour it; snows have covered it, beasts have cropped it, weeds have almost choaked it, yet it is preserved. And hath not God more care of that precious seed of his own Spirit in thee, than any husbandman hath of his corn? Hath he not said, "That having begun the good "work in thee, he will perfect it to the day of Christ?" Phil. i. 6. Hath he not said, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, John x. 28. Hast thou not many times said, and thought of it, as thou dost now, and yet it lives? O what matter of unspeakable joy and comfort is this to upright souls! Well then, be not discouraged, for thou dost not run as one uncertain, nor fight as one that beats the air, 1 Cor. ix. 26. But the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows who are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Though thy grace be weak, thy God is strong: though the stream seem sometimes to fail, yet it is fed by an ever-flowing fountain.

THE POEM.

'TIS justly wondered that an ear of corn
Should come at last in safety to the barn:
It runs through many hazards, threat'ning harms,
Betwixt the sower's hands and reaper's arms.
The earth no sooner takes it from the sack,
But you may see behind the sower's back
A troop of thieves which would at once destroy
That seed in which lies hid the seed of joy.
This dangerous period past, it soon doth fall
Into a second, no less critical.

It shooteth forth the tender blade, and then
The noxious weeds endanger it again.
These clasp about it till they kindly choak
The corn, as flattering ivy doth the oak.
Are weeds destroy'd and all that danger past?
Lo, now another comes, the worst at last:
For when i' th' ear it blows, begins to kern,
A mildew smites it, which you can't discern,
Nor any way prevent till all be lost,
The corn destroy'd with all your hopes and cost.
Thus saving grace, that precious seed of joy,
Which hell and nature plot how to destroy,
Escapes ten thousand dangers, first and last,
O who can say, now all the danger's past?
'Tis like a crazy bark toss'd in a storm,
Or like a taper which is strangely born
Without a lanthorn in a blust'ring night,
Or like to glimmering sparks, whose dying light
Is still preserv'd: the roaring waves swell high,
Like moving mountains in the dark'ned sky:
On their proud backs the little bark is even
Mounted unto the battlements of heaven;
From thence dismounted, to the deeps doth slide
Receiving water upon every side;
Yet he whose voice the proudest waves obey,
Brings it at last unto the quiet quay;
The blust'ring winds strive with a fatal puff,
To bring the taper to a stinking snuff:
Their churlish blasts extinguish it, and then
Our gentle breath recovers it again:
The fainting sparks beneath the ashes lie,
Where, choak'd and smother'd, they begin to die:
But these collected, we do gently blow,
'Till from faint sparks to lively flames they grow.
Ev'n thus is grace preserv'd, thus kept alive;
By constant wonders grace doth live and thrive.

CHAP. XIV.

Upon the Patience of the Husbandman for the Harvest.

Our husbandmen for harvest wait and stay:
O let not any saint do less than they!

OBSERVATION.

THE expectation of a good harvest at last, makes the husbandman, with untired patience, to digest all his labours. He that

plows, plows in hope, 1 Cor. vi. 19. And they are not so irrational to think they shall presently be partakers of their hope; nor so foolish to anticipate the harvest, by cutting down their corn before it be fully ripened: but are content to plow, sow, and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into their fields, and reap it down with joy.

APPLICATION.

CAN a little corn cause men to digest so many difficult labours, and make them wait with invincible patience till the reaping time come? Much more should the expectation of eternal glory steel and fortify my spirit against all intercurrent hardships and difficulties. It least of all becomes a Christian to be of an hasty and impatent spirit. "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the up-"right in heart," Psal. xcii. 11. "Behold the husbandman waiteth," &c. Jam. v. 7. "Be patient, therefore, my brethren, for the coming "of the Lord draws near." There are three great arguments to persuade Christians to a long-suffering and patient frame under sufferings. (1.) The example of Christ, Isa. liii. 7. To think how quietly he suffered all injuries and difficulties with invincible patience, is sufficient to shame the best of Christians, who are of such short spirits. I have read of one Elezarius, a nobleman, that when his wife wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, he thus answered her: You know sometimes my heart is ready to rise with indignation against such as wrong me; but I presently begin to think of the wrongs that Christ suffered; and say thus to myself; Although thy servant should pluck thy beard, and smite thee on thy face, this were nothing to what the Lord suffered: he suffered more and greater things; and assure yourself, wife, I never leave off thinking on the injuries done to my Saviour, till such time as my mind be still and quiet. To this purpose it was well noted by Bernard, speaking of Christ's humiliation, Was Christ the Lord of glory thus humbled and emptied of his fulness of glory? And shall such a worm as I swell? (2.) The desert of sin, Lam. iii. 39. "Why doth the living "man complain?" It was a good saying of the blessed Greenham; when sin lies heavy, affliction lies light. * And it is a famous instance which Dr. Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde. I have read (saith he) when the duke of Conde had voluntarily entered into the incommodites of a religious poverty and retirement, he was one day spied and pitied by a lord of Italy, who, out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person. The good duke answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences; for I send an harbinger before me, that makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The lord asked him who was his harbinger? He answered, the knowledge of

* Dr. Taylor's great Examplar, p. 103.

myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodgings, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve. (3.) And as the sense of sin, which merits hell sweetens present difficulties, so (to come home to the present similitude) do the expectations and hopes of a blessed harvest and reward in heaven. This made Abraham willing to wander up and down many years as a stranger in the world; for he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The hopes of such a harvest is encouragement enough to work hard, and wait long: Yet some Christians are so impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the time: but as God hath, by an unalterable law of nature appointed both the seasons of seed-time and harvest (which are therefore called the appointed weeks of the harvest) Jer. v. 24. and these cannot be hastened; but when we have done all that we can on our part, must wait till God send the former and the latter rain, and give every natural cause its effect; so is it in reference to our spiritual harvest; we are appointed to sweat in the use of all God's appointments; and when we have done all, must patiently wait till the divine decrees be accomplished, and the time of the promise be fully come; "In due "time we shall reap, if we faint not." To which patient expectation and quiet waiting for the glory to come, these following considerations are of excellent use.

1. As the husbandman knows when the seed-time is past, it will not be long to the harvest; and the longer he waits, the nearer still it is: so the Christian knows, "It is but yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. "And "that now his salvation is nearer than when he first believed," Rom. xiii. 11. What a small point of time is our waiting-time compared with eternity? Yet a few days more, and then comes the long expected and welcome harvest.

2. The husbandman can find other work to do before the reaping time come; he need not stand idle, though he cannot yet reap. And cannot a Christian find any work to do for God till he come to heaven? O there is much work to do, and such work is only proper to this season! You may now reprove sin, exhort to duty, succour the distressed; this is good work, and this is your only time for such work; the whole of eternity will be taken up in other employments. "I think it meet (saith Peter) as long as I am in this tabernacle, to "stir up your minds, knowing shortly that I must put off this taber-"nacle," 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. q. d. I know I have but a little time to work among you; I am almost at heaven; and therefore am willing to husband this present moment as well as I can for you. O Christians! you need not stand idle; look round about you upon the multitude of forlorn sinners; speak now to them for God; speak now to God for them; for shortly you shall so speak no more; you shall see them no more till you see them at Christ's bar; God leaves

you here for their sakes, up and be doing: if you had done all you were to do for yourselves and them, he would have you to heaven immediately; you should not wait a moment longer for your glory.

3. Husbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious fruits of the earth, yet all this while they are ripening and preparing for the harvest! they would not house it green, or take it before its time. And is not this also my preparation-time for glory? As God prepared heaven for his people by an eternal *decree;* Mat. xxv. 34. by an act of *creation,* Heb. xi. 10. by the death of Christ, which made a purchase of it, Heb. x. 19, 20. and by his ascension into it, John xiv. 2, 3. So the reason why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready; the barn is fit to receive the corn, but the corn is not fit to be gathered into it. "But for this self-same thing God is now working "us," 2 Cor. v. 5. he is every day at work by ordinances, and by providences, to perfect his work in us; and as soon as that is finished, we shall hear a voice like that, Rev. xi. 12. "Come up hither, "and immediately we shall be in the spirit;" for how ardently soever we long for that desirable day, Christ longs for it more than we can do.

4. The husbandman is glad of the first-fruits, that encourages him, though the greatest part be yet out: and have not you received the first fruits of that glory? Have you not earnests, pledges, and first-fruits of it? 'Tis your own fault, if every day you feed not upon such blessed comforts of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23. Rom. v. 2. 1 Pet. viii. 9. O how might the interposing time, even all the days of your patience here be sweetened with such prelibations of the glory to come!

5. Husbandmen know it is best to reap when it is fit to reap; one handful fully ripe is worth many sheaves of green corn. And you know, heaven will be sweetest to you when you are fittest for it; the child would pluck the apple whilst it is green, but he might gather it easier, and taste it sweeter, by tarrying longer for it. We would fain be glorified *per saltum.* When we have got a taste of heaven, we are all in haste to be gone. Then, O that I had wings as a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Then we cry to God for ourselves, as Moses for his sister Miriam, "Heal her [now] O "God, I beseech thee!" Numb. xii. 13. Glorify me now, O Lord, I pray thee! But, surely, as God hath contrived thy glory in the best of ways; so he hath appointed for thee the fittest of seasons; and whenever thou art gathered into glory, thou shalt come as a shock of corn in its season.

REFLECTIONS.

The longing soul's reflection.

I have waited for thy salvation, O God! Having received thy first-fruits, my soul longs to fill its bosom with the full ripe sheaves of glory: "As

" the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, " O God! O when shall I come and appear before God!" I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ! When shall I see that most lovely face? When shall I hear his soul-transporting voice! Some need patience to die: I need it as much to live. Thy sights, O God, by faith, have made this world a burden, this body a burden, and this soul to cry, like thirsty David, " O that one would " give me of the waters of Bethlehem to drink!" The husbandman longs for his harvest, because it is the reward of all his toil and labour. But what is his harvest to mine? What is a little corn to the enjoyment of God? What is the joy of harvest to the joy of heaven? What are the shoutings of men in the fields to the acclamations of glorified spirits in the kingdom of God? Lord, I have gone forth, bearing more precious seed than they; when shall I return rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me? Their harvest comes when they receive their corn; mine comes when I leave it. O much desired! O day of gladness of my heart! How long, Lord! how long! Here I wait as the poor man at Bethesda's pool, looking when my turn will come, but every one steps into heaven before me; yet Lord, I am content to wait till my time is fully come: I would be content to stay for my *glorification* till I have finished the work of my *generation*; and when I have done the will of God, then to receive the promise. If thou have any work on earth to use me in, I am content to abide: behold, the husbandman waiteth, and so will I; for thou art a God of judgment; and blessed are all they that wait for thee.

The lingering soul's reflection.

But how doth my slothful soul sink down into the flesh, and settle itself in the love of this animal life? How doth it hug and wrap up itself in the garment of this mortality, not desiring to be removed hence to the more perfect and blessed state? The husbandman is indeed content to stay till the appointed weeks of the harvest; but would he be content to wait always? O my sensual heart! is this life of hope as contentful to thee as the life of vision will be? Why dost thou not groan within thyself, that this mortality might be swallowed up of life? Doth not the scriptures describe the saints by their earnest looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life? Jude 21. " By their hastening unto the " coming of the day of God," 2 Pet. iii. 12. What is the matter, that my heart hangs back? Doth guilt lie upon my conscience? Or, have I gotten into a pleasant condition in the world, which makes me say as Peter on the mount, *It is good to be here?* Or want I the assurance of a better state? Must God make all my earthly comforts die, before I shall be willing to die? Awake faith, awake my love; beat up the drowsy desires of my soul, that I may say, " Make " haste my beloved, and come away."

THE POEM.

No prudent husbandman expects
The fruit of what he sows,
'Till every cause have its effects,
And then he reaps and mows:
He works in hope the year throughout,
And counts no labour lost,
If, when the season comes about,
His harvest quits his cost.
His rare example justly may
Rebuke and put to shame
My soul; which sows its seed and ease
And looks to reap the same.
Is cursed nature now become
So kind a soil to grace,
That to perfection it should come
Within so short a space?
Grace springs not up with seed and ease,
Like mushrooms in a night;
But rather by degrees increase,
As doth the morning light.
Is corn so dear to husbandmen?
Much more is heav'n to me;
Why should not I have patience then
To wait as well as he?
To promises, appointed years,
By God's decrees, are set;
These once expir'd, beyond its fears
My soul shall quickly get.
How small a part of hasty time,
Which quickly will expire,
Doth me within this world confine,
And then comes my desire.
Come, Lord, how long my soul hath gasp'd!
Faith my affections warms;
O when shall my poor soul be clasp'd
In its Redeemer's arms!
The time seems long, yet here I'll lie,
'Till thou, my God, do call:
It is enough, eternity
Will make amends for all.

CHAP. XV.

Upon the Harvest-Season.

Corn, fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in:
So must yourselves, when ripe in grace, or sin.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the fields are white to harvest, then husbandmen walk through them, rub the ears; and finding the grain full and solid, they presently prepare their scythes and sickles; send for their harvest-men, who quickly reap and mow them down; and after these follow the binders, who tie it up; from the field where it grew, it is carried to the barn, where it is threshed out; the good grain gathered into an heap, the chaff separated and burnt, or thrown to the dung-hill. How bare and naked do the fields look after harvest, which before were pleasant to behold? When the harvest-men enter into the field, it is (to allude to that, Joel ii. 3.) before them, like the garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness; and, in some places, it is usual to set fire to the dry stubble when the corn is housed; which rages furiously, and covers it all with ashes.

APPLICATION.

THE application of this, I find made to my hands by Christ himself, in Mat. xiii. 38, 39. "The field is the world; the good "seed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children "of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the "harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels."

The field is the world; there both the godly and ungodly live and grow together, until they be both ripe; and then they shall both be reaped down by death: death is the sickle that reaps down both. I will open this allegory in the following particulars:

1. In a catching harvest, when the husbandman sees the clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his corn with all possible haste, and houses it day and night.

So doth God, the great Husbandman; he hurries the saints into their graves when judgments are coming upon the world; Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and mer-"ciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is "taken away from the evil to come." Methuselah died the year before the flood; Augustine a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus just before the taking of Heidelburg; Luther a little before the wars broke out in Germany. But what speak I of single saints? Sometimes the Lord houses great numbers together, before some sweeping judgment comes. How many bright and glorious stars did set almost together within the compass of a few years, to the astonish-

ment of many wise and tender hearts in England? I find some of them thus ranked in a funeral elegy:

The learned Twisse went first, (it was his right)
Then holy Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
Hill, Whitaker, grave Gataker and Strong,
Perne, Marshal, Robinson, all gone along.
I have not nam'd them half; their only strife
Hath been (of late) who should first part with life.
These few who yet survive, sick of this age,
Long to have done their parts, and leave the stage.

The Lord sees it better for them to be under-ground, than above-ground; and therefore, by a merciful providence, sets them out of harm's way.

2. Neither the corn nor tares can possibly resist the sharp and keen sickle, when it is applied to them by the reaper's hand; neither can the godly or ungodly resist the stroke of death when God inflicts it; Eccl. viii. 8. "No man can keep alive his own soul in the day "of death; and there is no discharge in that war." The frail body of man is as unable to withstand that stroke, as the weak reeds or feeble stalks of the corn are to resist the keen scythe and sharp sickle.

3. The reapers receive the wheat which they cut down into their arms and bosom. Hence that expression by way of imprecation upon the wicked, Psal. cxxix. 6, 7. "Let them be as the grass upon the "house top, which withers before it grows up; wherewith the mower "filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves, his bosom." Such withered grass are the wicked, who are never taken into the reaper's bosom; but as soon as saints are cut down by death, they fall into the hands and bosoms of the angels of God, who bear them in their arms and bosoms to God their father, Luke xvi. 22. For look, as these blessed spirits did exceedingly rejoice at their conversion, Luke xv. 10. and thought it no dishonour to minister to them, whilst they stood in the field, Heb. i. 14. So when they are cut down by death, they will rejoice to be their convoy to heaven.

4. When the corn and weeds are reaped and mowed down, they shall never grow any more in that field; neither shall we ever return to live an animal life any more after death, Job vii. 9, 10. "As the "cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to "the grave, shall come up no more; he shall return no more to "his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

Lastly, (to come home to the particular subject of this chapter) the reapers are never sent to cut down the harvest until it be fully ripe; neither will God reap down saints or sinners until they be come to a maturity of grace or wickedness. Saints are not reaped down until their grace is ripe, Job v. 26. "Thou shalt come to thy grave "in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in its season." 'Not that 'every godly man dies in such a full old age, (saith Mr. Caryl on that

'place) but yet, in one sense, it is an universal truth, and ever ful-
'filled; for whensoever they die, they die in a good age; yea,
'though they die in the spring and flower of their youth, they die
'in a good old age; i. e. they are ripe for death whenever they die.
'Whenever a godly man dies, it is harvest-time with him, though
'in a natural capacity he be cut down while he is green, and crop-
'ped in the bud or blossom; yet in his spiritual capacity he never
'dies before he be ripe. God ripens him speedily, when he intends
'to take him out of the world speedily; he can let out such warm
'rays and beams of his Spirit upon him, as shall soon maturate the
'seeds of grace into a preparedness for glory.'

The wicked also have their ripening-time for hell and judgment; God doth with much long-suffering endure the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction. Of their ripeness for judgment the Scripture often speaks, Gen. xv. 16. "The sin of the Amorites is not "yet full." And of Babylon it is said, Jer. li. 13. "O thou that "dwellest upon many waters! thine end is come, and the measure "of thy covetousness."

It is worth remarking, that the measure of the sin, and the end of the sinner, come together. So Joel iii. 13. "Put ye in the sickle, "for the harvest of the earth is ripe; for the press is full, the fats "overflow: for their wickedness is great." Where, note, sinners are not cut down till they be ripe and ready. Indeed, they are never ripe for death, nor ready for the grave; that is, fit to die; yet they are always ripe for wrath, and ready for hell before they die. Now, as husbandmen judge of the ripeness of their harvest, by the colour and hardness of the grain; so may we judge of the ripeness both of saints and sinners, for heaven or hell, by these following signs.

Three signs of the maturity of grace.

1. WHEN the corn is near ripe, it bows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying, than in the days of their first profession. The longer a saint grows in the world, the better he is still acquainted with his own heart, and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things. Paul had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the chiefest of sinners, and least of saints, 1 Tim. i. 15. Eph. iii. 8. A Christian in the progress of his knowledge and grace, is like a vessel cast into the sea, the more it fills, the deeper it sinks. Those that went to study at Athens (saith Plutarch) at first coming seemed to themselves to be wise men; afterwards only lovers of wisdom, and after that, only rhetoricians, such as could speak of wisdom, but knew little of it, and last of all, ideots in their own apprehensions; still, with the increase of learning, laying aside their pride and arrogancy.

2. When harvest is nigh, the grain is more solid and pithy than ever it was before; green corn is soft and spungy, but ripe corn is

substantial and weighty: So it is with Christians; the affections of a young Christian, perhaps are more feverous and sprightly; but those of a grown Christian are more judicious and solid; their love to Christ abounds more and more in all judgments, Phil. i. 9. The limbs of a child are more active and pliable: but as he grows up to a perfect state, the parts are more consolidated and firmly knit. The fingers of an old musician are not so nimble; but he hath a more judicious ear in music than in his youth.

3. When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the ground, and there shed; whereby it doth, as it were, anticipate the harvest-man, and calls upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike to which are the lookings and longings, the groanings and hastenings of ready Christians to their expected glory; they hasten to the coming of the Lord, or, as Montanus more fitly renders it, they hasten the coming of the Lord; (i. e.) they are urgent and instant in their desires and cries to hasten his coming; their desires sally forth to meet the Lord; they willingly take death by the hand; as the corn bends to the earth, so doth these souls to heaven: This shows their harvest to be near.

Six signs of the maturity of sin.

WHEN sinners are even dead-ripe for hell, the signs appear upon them; or by these, at least, you may conclude those souls not to be far from wrath, upon whom they appear.

1. When conscience is wasted, and grown past feeling, having no remorse for sin; when it ceases to check, reprove, and smite, for sin any more, the day of that sinner is at hand, his harvest is even come. The greatest violation of conscience is the greatest of sins; this was the case of the forlorn Gentiles, among whom Satan had such a plentiful harvest; the patience of God suffered them to grow till their consciences were grown seared, and past feelings, Eph. iv. 19. When a member is so mortified, that if you lance and cut it never so much, no fresh blood, or quick flesh appears, nor doth the man feel any pain in all this, then it is time to cut it off.

2. When men give themselves over to the satisfaction of their lusts, to commit sin with greediness, then are they grown to a maturity of sin; when men have slipped the reins of conscience, and rush headlong into all impiety, then the last sands of God's patience are running down. Thus Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner gave themselves over to wickedness and strange sins; and then justice quickly gave them up for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. That man is even ripe for hell, that is become a contriver of sin, a designer, a student in wickedness. One would think it strange that any man should set his invention on work upon such a subject as sin is, that any should study to become a dexterous artist this way! and yet the scripture frequently speaks of such, "whose bellies pre-

"pare deceit," Job xv. 35. "who travail in pain to bring forth" this deformed birth, ver. 20. "who wink with their eyes," whilst plodding wickedness, as men used to do when they are most intent upon the study of any knotty problem, Prov. vi. 13. These have so much of hell already in them, that they are more than half in hell already.

4. He that of a forward professor is turned a bitter persecutor, is also within a few rounds of the top of the ladder; the contempt of their light the Lord hath already punished upon them, in their obduracy and madness against the light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almost gone beyond all hope of recovery. Towards other sinners God usually exercises more patience, but with such he makes short work. When Judas turns traitor to his Lord, he is quickly sent to his own place. Such as are again intangled and overcome of those lusts they once seemed to have clean escaped, these bring upon themselves swift damnation, and their judgment lingers not, 2 Pet. ii. 3, 20.

5. He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of his sin, but derides all counsel, and like a strong current, rages at, and sweeps away all obstacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead lake, Prov. xxix. 1. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his "neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." This is a death-spot, a hell-spot, wherever it appears. From this very symptom the prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruin of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 16. "I know that God hath determin-"ed to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not "hearkened to my voice." He that will not be timely counselled, shall be quickly destroyed.

Lastly, When a man comes to glory in his sin, and boast of his wickedness, then it is time to cut him down, "whose end is de-"struction, whose glory is in their shame;" Phil. iii. 19. This is a braving, a daring of God to his face; and with whomsoever he bears long, to be sure these are none of them.

You see now what are the signs of a full ripe sinner; and when it comes to this, either with a nation, or with a single person, then ruin is near, Joel iii. 13. Gen. xv. 16. It is in the filling up of the measure of sin, as in the filling up of a vessel cast into the sea which rolls from side to side, taking in the water by little and little till it be full, and then down it sinks to the bottom. Mean while, admirable is Divine patience, which bears with these vessels of wrath, whilst fitting for destruction!

REFLECTION.

The reflection of a growing Christian.

1. Cheer thyself, O my soul! with the heart-strengthening bread of this Divine meditation. Let faith turn every drop of this truth into a soul-reviving cordial. God hath sown the precious seed of grace

upon my soul; and though my heart hath been an unkindly soil, which hath kept it back, and much hindered its growth, yet, blessed be the Lord, it still grows on, though by slow degrees; and from the springing of the seed, and shooting forth of those gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching harvest: Now is my salvation nearer than when I believed; every day I come nearer to my salvation, Rom. xiii. 11. O that every day I were more active for the God of my salvation! Grow on, my soul, and add to thy faith virtue, to thy virtue knowledge, &c. Grow on from faith to faith; keep thyself under the ripening influences of heavenly ordinances: The faster thou growest in grace, the sooner thou shalt be reaped down in mercy, and bound up in the bundle of life, 1 Sam. xv. 29. I have not yet attained the measure and proportion of grace assigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the things before me, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of my heavenly calling, Phil. iii. 12, 13. O mercy to be admired! that I who lately had one foot in hell, stand now with one foot in heaven!

The reflection of the decaying Christian.

2. But the case is far different with me; whilst others are ripening apace for heaven, I am withering: many a soul plowed up by conviction, and sown by sanctification long after me, hath quite overtopped and outgrown me; my sweet and early blossoms are nipped and blown off, my bright morning overcast and clouded: had I kept on, according to the rate of my first growth, I had either now been in heaven, or at least in the suburbs of it on earth; but my graces wither and languish, my heart contracts and cools to heavenly things; the sun and rain of ordinances and providences improve not my graces: how sad therefore is the state of my soul!

The reflection of a hardening sinner.

3. Thy case, O declining saint, is sad, but not like mine: thine is but a temporary remission of the acts of grace, which is recoverable; but I am judicially hardening, and "treasuring up to myself wrath "against the day of wrath," Rom. ii. 5. Time was when I had some tender sense of sin, when I could mourn and grieve for it; now I have none at all: my heart is grown stupid and sottish. Time was when I had some conscientious care of duty, when my heart would smite me for the neglect of it; but now none at all. Wretched soul! what wilt thou do? Thou art gone far indeed, a few steps further will put thee beyond hope: hitherto I stand in the field; the long-suffering God doth yet spare me; yea, spare me while he hath cut down many of my companions in sin round about me. What doth this admirable patience, this long-suffering, drawn out to a wonder, speak concerning me! doth it not tell me, that the Lord is not willing I should perish, but rather come to repentance? 2 Pet. iii. 9. And what argument is like his pity and patience, to lead a soul to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. O that I may not frustrate

at last the end of a long-suffering God, lest he proportion the degree of his wrath, according to the length of his patience!

THE POEM.

WHEN fields are white, to harvest forth you go
With scythes and sickles to reap down and mow.
Down go the laden ears flat to the ground,
Which those that follow having stitch'd and bound,
'Tis carried home unto the barn, and so
The fields are red where lately corn did grow.
This world's the field, and they that dwell therein
The corn and tares, which long have ripen'd been:
Angels the reapers, and the judgment-day
The time of harvest, when, like corn and hay,
The fading flow'rs of earthly glory must
Be mowed down, and level'd with the dust:
The barns are heav'n and hell, the time draws nigh,
When through the darken'd clouds and troubl'd sky,
The Lord shall break; a dreadful trumpet shall
Sound to the dead; the stars from heaven fall;
The rolling spheres with horrid flames shall burn:
And then the tribes on earth shall wail and mourn.
The judgment set, before Christ's awful throne
All flesh shall be conven'd, and ev'ry one
Receive his doom; which done, the just shall be
Bound in life's bundle, even as you see
The full ripe ears of wheat bound up and borne
In sheaves with joy into the owner's barn.
This done, the angels next in bundles bind
The tares together; as they had combin'd
In acting sin, so now their lot must be
To burn together in one misery.
Drunkards with drunkards pinion'd, shall be sent
To hell together in one regiment.
Adulterers and swearers there shall lie
In flames among their old society.
O dreadful howlings! O the hideous moans
Of fetter'd sinners! O the tears! the groans!
The doleful lamentations as they go
Chain'd fast together to their place of woe!
The world thus clear'd, as fields when harvest's in,
Shall be no more a stage for acting sin.
With purifying flames it shall be burn'd,
Its stately fabrics into ashes turn'd.
Cease then, my soul to doat on, or admire
This splendid world, which is reserv'd for fire.
Decline the company of sinners here,
As thou would'st not be shackled with them there.

CHAP. XVII.

Upon the Care of Husbandmen to provide for Winter.

Your winter store in summer you provide:
To Christian prudence this must be applied.

OBSERVATION.

GOOD husbands are careful in summer to provide for winter. Then they gather in their winter store; food and fuel for themselves, and fodder for their cattle. "He that gathers in summer, is a wise "son: but he that sleeps in harvest is a son that causeth shame," Prov. x. 5. A well chosen season is the greatest advantage to any action: which, as it is seldom found in haste, so it is often lost by delay. It is a good proverb which the frugal Dutch have among them:—*Bonus servatius faciet bonum bonifacium:*—A good saver will make a good benefactor. And it is a good proverb of our own, He that neglects the occasion, the occasion will neglect him. Husbandmen know that summer will not hold all the year; neither will they trust to the hopes of a mild and favourable winter, but in season provide for the worst.

APPLICATION.

WHAT excellent Christians should we be, were we but as provident and thoughtful for our souls? It is doubtless a singular point of Christian wisdom to foresee a day of spiritual straits and necessities; and, during the day of grace, to make provision for it. This great gospel-truth is excellently shadowed forth in this natural observation, which I shall branch out into these seven particulars.

1. Husbandmen know there is a change and vicissitude of seasons and weather; though it be pleasant summer weather now, yet winter will tread upon the heel of summer: frosts, snows, and great falls of rain must be expected. This alternate course of seasons, in nature, is settled by a firm law of the God of nature to the end of the world, Gen. viii. 22. "Whilst the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, "cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night, shall not "cease."

And Christians know, that there are changes in the right-hand of the Most High, in reference to their spiritual seasons. If there be a *spring-time* of the gospel, there will be also an *autumn;* if a day of *prosperity*, it will set in a night of *adversity:* "for God hath set "the one over against the other," Eccles. vii. 14. In heaven there is a day of everlasting serenity; in hell a night of perfect endless horror and darkness; on earth, light and darkness take their turns, prosperity and adversity, even to souls as well as bodies, succeed each other. If there be a gospel-day, a day of grace now current, it will have its period and determination, Gen. iii. 6.

2. Common prudence and experience enable the husbandman, in the midst of summer, to foresee a winter, and provide for it before he feel it; yea, natural instinct teaches this to the very birds of the air, and beasts of the field.

And spiritual wisdom should teach Christians to exercise their foreseeing faculties, and not suffer them to feel evil before they fear it. But, oh! the stupifying nature of sin! Though the stork in the heavens knows her appointed time, and the turtle, crane, and swallow the time of their coming, yet man, whom God hath made wiser than the fowls of the air, in this acts quite below them, Jer. viii. 7.

3. The end of God's ordaining a summer season, and sending warm and pleasant weather is to ripen the fruits of the earth, and give the husbandman fit opportunity to gather them in.

And God's design of giving men a day of grace, is to furnish them with an opportunity for the everlasting happiness and salvation of their souls; Rev. ii. 21. "I gave her space to repent." It is not a mere reprival of the soul, or only a delay of the execution of threatened wrath, though there be much mercy in that; but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God is to open for them a way to escape the wrath to come, by leading them to repentance," Rom. ii. 4.

4. The husbandman doth not find all harvest-seasons alike favourable: sometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hindrance in their business; other times it is a catching harvest, but now and then a fair day, and then they must be nimble, or all is lost.

There is also a great difference in soul-seasons; some have had a long and fair season of grace; a hundred and twenty years did God wait upon the old world, in the ministry of Noah. Long did God wait on the gainsaying Israelites, Isa. xlii. 14. "I have a long time "held my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself." Others have a short and catching season, all lies upon a day, upon a nick of time, Acts xvii. 30.

5. A proper season neglected and lost is irrecoverable. Many things in husbandry, must be done in their season, or cannot be done at all for that year: if he plow not, and sow not in the proper season, he loses the harvest of that year.

It is even so as to spiritual seasons: Christ neglected, and grace despised, in the season when God offers them, are irrecoverably lost, Prov. i. 28. "Then (that is when the season is over) "they shall "call upon me, but I will not hear." Oh! there is a great deal of time, in a short opportunity; that may be done, or prevented, in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done, or prevented, in a man's life-time afterwards. There was one resolved to kill Julius Cæsar such a day: the night before a friend sent him a letter to acquaint him with it: but he being at supper, and busy in discourse, said, to-morrow is a new day; and indeed it was *dies novissima*, his last day to him.

Whence it became a proverb in Greece, *To-morrow is a new day.* Our glass runs in heaven, and we cannot see how much or little of the sand of God's patience is yet to run down; but this is certain, when that glass is run, there is nothing to be done for our souls, Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadst known, at least, in this thy day, "the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from "thine eyes."

6. Those husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in winter: he that then provides fuel, shall sit warm in his habitation, when others blow their fingers. He that provides food for his family, and fodder for his cattle, in the harvest, shall eat the fruit of it, and enjoy the comfort of his labours, when others shall be exposed to shifts and straits. And he that provides for eternity, and lays up for his soul a good foundation against the time to come, shall eat when others are hungry, and sing when others howl, Isa. lxv. 13. A day of death will come, and that will be a day of straits to all negligent souls; but then the diligent Christian shall enjoy the peace and comfort that shall flow in upon his heart, from his holy care and sincere diligence in duties; as 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in "sincerity and godly simplicity, we have had our conversation in this "world." So Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O "Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect "heart." A day of judgment will come, and then foolish virgins, who neglected the season of getting oil in their lamps, will be put to their shifts; then they come to the wise, and say, Give us of your oil, Matth. xxv. 8, 9. but they have none to spare, and the season of buying is then over.

7. No wise husbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his hay and corn, upon a presumption of much fair weather to come; he will not say, The weather is settled, and I need not trouble myself; though my corn and hay be fit for the house, yet I may get it in another time as well as now.

And no wise Christian will lose a present season for his soul, upon the hopes of much more time, yet to come; but will rather say, Now is my time, and I know not what will be hereafter: hereafter I may wish to see one of the days of the Son of man, and not see it, Luke xvii. 22. It is sad to hear how cunning some men are to dispute themselves out of heaven, as if the devil had hired them to plead against their own souls; sometimes urging the example of those that were called at the eleventh hour, Mat. xx. 6. and sometimes that of the penitent thief: but, oh! to how little purpose is the former pleaded? they that were called at the eleventh hour were never called before, as these have been; no man had hired, that is, called or invited them to Christ; and for the thief (as Mr. Fenner rightly observes) it was a singular and extraordinary example. It was done

when Christ hanged on the cross, and was to be inaugurated; then kings manifest such bounty, and pardon such crimes as are never pardoned afterwards. Besides, God was then in a way of working miracles; then he rent the rocks, opened the graves, raised the dead, and converted this thief; but God is now out of that way.

REFLECTIONS.

The careless soul's reflection.

1. I have indeed been a good husband for the world: with what care and providence have I looked out for myself and family to provide food to nourish them, and clothes to defend them against the asperities of winter? mean while, neglecting to make provision for eternity, or take care for my soul. O my destitute soul! how much have I slighted and undervalued thee? I have taken more care for an horse, or an ox, than for thee: a well-stored barn, but an empty soul. Will it not shortly be with me, as with that careless mother, who when her house was on fire, busily bestirred herself to save the goods, but forgot the child (though it were saved by another hand)? and then minding her child, ran up and down like one distracted, wringing her hands, and crying, O my child! my child! I have saved my goods, and lost my child! Such will be the case of thee my soul, Matth. xvi. 26. Besides, how easy will my conviction be at the bar of Christ? Will not my providence and care for the things of this life, leave me speechless and self-condemned in that day? What shall I answer, when the Lord shall say, Thou couldest foresee a winter, and seasonably provide for it; yea, thou hadst so much care of thy very beasts, to provide for their necessities: and why tookest thou no care for thy soul? Was that only not worth the caring for?

The presumptuous soul's reflection.

2. Is it so dangerous to neglect a present proper season of grace? What then have I done, who have suffered many such seasons to die away in my hand, upon a groundless hope of future opportunities? Ah deluded wretch! what if that supposition fail? Where am I then? I am not the lord of time, neither am I sure, that he who is, will ever vouchsafe an hour of grace in old age, to him that hath neglected many such hours in youth; neither indeed is it ordinary for God so to do. It is storied of Caius Marius Victorius, who lived about three hundred years after Christ, and to his old age continued a Pagan; but at last being convinced of the Christian verity, he came to Simplicianus, and told him he would be a Christian; but neither he nor the church could believe it, it being so rare an example for any to be converted at his age; but at last seeing it was real, there was a shouting and gladness, and singing of psalms in all churches; the people crying, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian! This was written for a wonder: and what ground have I to think, that God will work such wonders for me, who have neglected his ordinary means of salvation?

3. Bless the Lord, O my soul! who gave thee a season, a day for eternal life, which is more than he hath afforded for thousands; yea, bless the Lord for giving thee an heart to understand and improve that season. I confess I have not improved it as I ought; yet this I can (through mercy) say, that however it fare in future times with my outward man, though I have no treasures or stores laid up on earth, or if I have, they are but corruptible, yet I have a blessed hope laid up in heaven, Col. i. 5. I have bags that wax not old. Whilst worldlings rejoice in their stores and heaps, I rejoice in these eternal treasures. *The industrious soul's reflection.*

THE POEM.

OBSERVE in summer's sultry heat,
How in the hottest day
The husbandman doth toil and sweat
About his corn and hay:
If then he should not reap and mow,
And gather in his stores,
How should he live, when, for the snow,
He can't move out of doors?
The little ants, and painful bees,
By nature's instinct led,
These have their summer granaries
For winter furnished.
But thou, my soul, whose summer's day
Is almost past and gone;
What soul-provision dost thou lay
In stock to spend upon?
If nature teaches to prepare
For temporal life, much rather
Grace should provoke to greater care,
Soul-food in time to gather.
Days of affliction and distress
Are hasting on apace;
If now I live in carelessness,
How sad will be my case!
Unworthy of the name of man,
Who for that soul of thine,
Wilt not do that which others can
Do for their very kine.
Think, frugal farmers, when you see
Your mows of corn and hay,
What a conviction this will be
To you another day:
Who ne'er were up before the sun,
Nor brake an hour's rest

For your poor souls, as you have done
So often for a beast.
Learn once to see the difference
Betwixt eternal things,
And those poor transient things of sense,
That fly with eagle's wings.

CHAP. XVII.

Upon reaping the same we sow.

When from tare-seeds you see choice wheat to grow,
Then from your lusts may joy and comfort flow.

OBSERVATION.

GOD gives to every seed its own body, 1 Cor. xv. 38. At first he created every tree and herb of the field having its seed in itself, for the conservation of their *species*, and they all inviolably observe the law of their creation. All fruits naturally rise out of the seeds and roots proper to them. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, "nor figs of thistles:" such productions would be monstrous in nature; and although the juice or sap of the earth be the common matter of all kind of fruits, yet it is specificated according to the different sorts of plants and seeds it nourishes. Where wheat is sown it is turned into wheat; in an apple-tree, it becomes an apple; and so in every sort of plants or seeds, it is concocted into fruit proper to the kind.

APPLICATION.

TRANSLATE this into spirituals, and the proposition shadowed forth by it, is fully expressed by the apostle, Gal. vi. 7, 8. "What a "man sows, that shall he reap: They that sow to the flesh, shall "of the flesh reap corruption; and they that sow to the Spirit, shall "of the Spirit reap life everlasting." And as sure as the harvest follows the seed-time, so sure shall such fruits and effects result from the seeds of such actions. "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vani- "ty," Prov. xxii. 8. "And they that now go forth weeping, and bear- "ing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their "sheaves with them," Psal. cxxvi. 6. The sum of all this is, that our present actions have the same respect and relation to future rewards and punishments, as the seed we sow in our fields hath to the harvest we reap from it. Every gracious action is the seed of joy; and every sinful action the seed of anguish and sorrow to the soul that soweth it. Two things are sensibly presented to us in this similitude.

1. That as the seed sown is presently covered from our sight under

the clods, and for some time after we see no more of it, and yet at last it appears again; by which it is evident to us that it is not finally lost: So our present actions, though physically transient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not lost, but after a time shall appear again, in order to a retribution.

If this were not so, all good and holy actions would be to the loss of him that performed them. All the self-denial, spending duties, and sharp sufferings of the people of God, would turn to their damage, though not in point of honesty, yet in point of personal utility; and then also, what difference would there be betwixt the actions of a man and a beast, with respect to future good or evil? Yea, man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and all souls be swayed in their motions, only by the influence of present things: And where then would religion be found in the world? It is an excellent note of Drexellius; 'Our works (saith he) do not pass away 'as soon as they are done, but as seed sown, shall, after a time, rise 'up to all eternity: Whatever we think, speak, or do, once spoken, 'thought, or done, is eternal, and abides for ever.'

What Zeuxus, the famous limner, said of his work, may be truly said of all our works; *Æternitati pingo*,—I paint for eternity. O, how careful should men be of what they speak and do whilst they are commanded so to speak and so to do, as those that shall be judged by the perfect law of liberty! James ii. 12. What more transient than a vain word? And yet for such words men shall give an account in the day of judgment, Matth. xii. 36. That is the first thing: Actions, like seed, shall rise and appear again in order to a retribution.

2. The other thing held forth in this similitude is, that according to the nature of our actions now, will be the fruit and reward of them then. Though the fruit or consequence of holy actions, for the present may seem bitter, and the fruit of sinful actions, sweet and pleasant; yet there is nothing more certain than that their future fruits shall be according to their present nature and quality, 2 Cor. v. 10. Then Dionysius shall retract that saying, *Ecce quam prospera navigatio a Deo datur sacrilegis*, Behold how God favours our sacrileges! Sometimes indeed (though but rarely) God causes sinners to reap in this world the same that they have sown; as hath been their sin, such hath been their punishment. It was openly confesed by Adonibezek, Judg. i. 7. "As I have done, so hath God re-"quited me."

Socrates, in his church history, furnishes us with a pertinent passage to this purpose, concerning Valens the Emperor, who was an Arian, and a bitter persecutor of the Christians: This man, when eighty of the orthodox Christians sailed from Constantinople to Nicomeda, to treat with him about the points of Arianism, and to settle

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* *Drexellius de æternitate prope finem.*

the matter by way of dispute; the emperor hearing of their arrival, while they were yet in the harbour, and not a man landed, caused the ships to be fired wherein they were, and so consumed them all. Not long after, in his wars against the Goths, he was overthrown; and hiding himself in a little cottage, the enemy coming by, burnt it and him together. Thus this wretch reaped what he sowed, burning for burning, the very same in kind paid him again. It is not always so in this world; but so it shall be in that to come: The tables shall then be turned, and the *scene* altered; for shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously? * Diogenes was tempted to think, that God had cast off the government of the world when he saw the wicked prosper in their wickedness. On the same ground many have been tempted to Atheism; but then the world shall see distributive justice shining out in its glory, "Tribulation, anguish, and wrath "to every soul of man that doth evil; but glory, honour, and peace "to every man that worketh good," Rom. ii. 9, 10. Then it will appear what seed we sowed, what lives we lived; "For God shall "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether "it be good or evil," Eccles. xii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

The profane person's reflection.

1. This meditation may be to me what the hand-writing upon the wall was to that profane prince, Dan. v. 5, 6. and a like effect it should have upon me; for if all the actions of this life be seed sown for the next, Lord, what a crop, what a dreadful harvest am I like to have! How many oaths and curses, lies and vain words have I sown with my tongue! How have I wronged, oppressed, and over-reached in my dealings! Rushed into all profaneness, drunkenness, uncleanness, sabbath-breaking, &c. "as the horse rusheth into the battle!" And what shall I reap from such seed as this but vengeance and fury! These sins seemed pleasant in the commission, but, oh! how bitter will it be on their account? "What shall I do when God riseth up; "and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?" Job xxxi. 14. Is it not reasonable and just, O my soul! that thou shouldest eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou hast sown? I thought nothing but profit and pleasure would spring from my lust: but now I see it is a root bearing gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Wretched soul; what shall I do? By these actions I am undone. I have been the author of mine own ruin, twisted an halter with mine own fingers for the execution of mine own soul: Oh! let me rather taste the bitterness of sin, by repentance now, than enjoy its present pleasures which betray the soul to endless wrath!

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* *Cum video, mala fata bonis, ignoscite quæso:*
Sollicitor nullos esse putare Deos. Ovid.

2. How have I also been deceived in this matter? I verily thought that glory and immortality would have been the fruit and product of my moral honesty and righteousness; *The moral man's reflection.* that joy and peace had been seminally contained in those actions; but now I see such fruit can spring from no other root but special grace. Glory is disclosed from no other bud but holiness. Alas! all my planting and sowing was to little purpose, because I sowed not the right kind of seed; the best fruit I can expect from this is but a lesser degree of damnation.

Deluded soul! thy seed is no better than what the moral heathens sowed: And do I expect better fruit than what they reaped? Civility without Christ, is but a free slavery; and Satan holds me as fast in captivity by this, as he doth the profane by the pleasure of their lusts: Either I must sow better seed, or look to reap bitter fruit.

3. Mean while, bless the Lord, O my soul! who enabled thee to sow better seed; who kept thee watching, humbling thyself, and praying, *The holy soul's reflection.* whilst others have been swearing, drinking and blaspheming. This will yield thee fruit of joy in the world to come; yea, it yields present peace to thy conscience. These revenues are better than gold, sweeter than the honey, and the honeycomb; not that such fruits are meritoriously contained in these actions; I sow to myself in righteousness, but I reap in mercy, Hos. x. 12. This is the way in which God will save and glorify me. O then, let me be ever abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

THE POEM.

'T WOULD be a strange and monstrous thing to see
Cherries or plumbs grow on an apple-tree.
Whoever gather'd from the thistle figs?
Or fruitless grapes from off the worthless twigs
Of pricking thorns? In nature still we find
All its productions answering to their kind.
As are the plants we set, or seeds we sow,
Such is the fruit we shake, and corn we mow:
And canst thou think, that from corruption's root
Thy soul shall pluck the sweet and pleasant fruit
Of spiritual peace! Whoever that was wise,
Abus'd himself with such absurdities?
Look what you sow, the very same you'll reap,
The fruit of what you plant, be sure you'll eat,
How are they baffled by a subtile devil,
Who hope for heaven, whilst their ways are evil?
Such reasonings here their credulous souls beguile,
At which, in other things, themselves would smile.

Our present acts, though slightly passed by,
Are so much seed sown for eternity.
The seeds of prayers, secret groans and tears,
Will shoot at last into the full-blown ears
Of peace and joy. Blessed are they that sow
Beside these *waters*, yea, thrice bless'd, that go
Bearing such precious seed: Though now they mourn,
With joyful sheaves they shortly shall return.
Needs must the full-ripe fruits in heaven be good,
When as the seed was glory in the bud.
But oh! the bitter, baneful fruits of sin,
When all the pleasures sinners have therein,
Like faded blossoms to the ground shall fall,
Then they will taste the wormwood and the gall!
What God and conscience now of sin report,
You slight, and with their dreadful threat'nings sport:
But he'll convice you then your ways are naught,
As Gideon the men of Succoth taught.
If sermons cannot, fire and brimstone must
Teach men how good it is to pamper lust.
When conscience takes thee by the throat, and cries
Now wretch! now sinner! thou that didst despise
My warnings; learn, and ever learning be
That lesson which thou ne'er wouldst learn of me.
The stoutest sinner then would howl and roar,
O sin I never saw thy face before.
Is this the fruit of sin? Is this the place
Where I must lie? Is this indeed the case
Of my poor soul! must I be bound in chains
With these companions? Oh! are these the gains
I get by sin? Poor wretch! I that would never
See this before, am now undone for ever!

CHAP. XVIII.

Upon the Joy of Harvest-men.

Great is the joy of harvest-men: yet less
Than theirs whom God doth with his favour bless.

OBSERVATION.

AMONG all earthly joys, these four sorts are noted in scripture, as the most excellent and remarkable. (1.) *Nuptial joys;* the day of espousals is the day of the gladness of a man's heart, Cant. iii. 11. (2.) *The joy of children:* Though now it seems but a common *mercy* to most, and a burden to some, yet the people of God were wont to esteem it a choice mercy, and rejoiced greatly in it, John xvi. 21. there is joy that a man is born into the world.

(3.) *The joy of conquests and victories*, when men divide the spoil; And, lastly, *The joy of harvest.* These two we find put together, as principal matters of joy, Isa. ix. 3. "They joy before thee according "to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. The joy of harvest is no small joy; *Gaudium messis est messis gaudii;* The joy of harvest, is the harvest of their joy. It is usual with men, when they have reaped down their harvest (or cut the neck, as they call it) to demonstrate their joy by shouting, and loud acclamations.

APPLICATION.

THUS, and unspeakably more than thus, do saints rejoice and shout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in many a weary duty. This joy of harvest, as great as it is, and as much as carnal hearts are lifted up with it, is but a trifle, a thing of nought, compared with yours; after they have sown to themselves in righteousness, and waited for the effects and returns of their duties with patience, and at last come to reap in mercy, either the full harvest in heaven or but the first-fruits of it on earth, yet rejoice, "with joy unspeak- "able and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. "This puts more gladness "into their hearts, than when corn and wine increase," Psal. iv. 7. Carnal joys are but as soul-fevers, the agues of the inward man; there is a great difference betwixt the unnatural inflammations of a feverish body, which waste the spirits, and drink up the radical moisture, and the kindly well-tempered heat of an healthy body; and as much between the sweet, serene, and heavenly joy, which flow from the bosom of Christ in the hearts of believers, and those earthly delights which carnal hearts, in a sensual way, suck out of creature enjoyments. I will shew you the transcendency of spiritual joys, above the joy of harvest, in these eight particulars following.

1. You that joy with the joy of the harvest, are glad, because now you have food for yourselves and families to live upon all the year: but the Christian rejoiceth because he hath bread to eat that the world knows not of, Rev. ii. 17. Christ is the food of his soul, and his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, John v. 55. i. e. the most real and excellent food. You read Psal. lxxviii. 25. that men did eat angels food, i. e. Manna; which was such excellent bread, that if angels did live upon material food, this would be chosen for them; and yet this is but a type and dark shadow of Jesus Christ, the food of believers.

2. You rejoice when your harvest is in, because corn is virtually many other things besides food; you can turn it into clothes to keep you warm, and many other necessaries may be purchased by it; but yet it is not like Christ, the object of a saint's joy; though it answers many things, it doth not answer all things, as Christ doth; turn it into what you will, it hath but a limited and respective usefulness;

but Jesus Christ is all in all to believers, and out of him their faith can fetch all supplies; he is their health in sickness, their strength in weakness, their ease in pain, their honour in reproach, their wealth in poverty, their friend in friendlessness, their habitation when harbourless, their enlargement in bonds, the strength of their hearts, and life of their life; O! he is a full Christ! and whatever excellencies are scattered among all the creatures, do meet all in him, and much more.

3. You rejoice, when you have gotten in your harvest, because now you can free those engagements, and pay those debts wich you have contracted. 'Tis a comfort to be out of debt; and you may lawfully rejoice that God gives you wherewith to quit your engagements, that you may owe no man any thing but love; but still the joy of harvest falls short of the joy of the saints; for you rejoice that you are or have wherewith to help yourselves out of men's debt: but they rejoice that they are out of God's debt; that his book is cancelled, and their sins pardoned: that by reason of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the law can demand nothing from them, Rom. viii. 1. O what matter of joy is this!

4. You rejoice, because now your corn is out of danger; all the while it was abroad, it was in hazard, but now it is housed you fear not the rain: but Christians rejoice, not because their corn is safe, but because their souls are so. All the while they abode in an unregenerate state, they were every moment in danger of the storms of wrath: but now being in Christ, that danger is over; and what compare is there betwixt the safety of a little corn, and the security of an immortal soul?

5. Your joy is but a gift of common providence. Turks and Heathens can rejoice with your joy; but the joy of a Christian, is a peculiar favour and gift of God. Corn is given to all nations, even the most barbarous and wicked have store of it; but Christ is the portion but of a few, and those the dearly beloved of God. Luther said of the whole Turkish empire, (where is the best and greatest store of corn) that it is but a crumb which the master of the family throws to the dogs. He that had more corn than his barns could hold, now wants a drop of water to cool his tongue. Christ is a gift bestowed only upon God's elect.

Your joy will have an end; the time is coming, that when you have reaped down your harvests, yourselves must be reaped down by death, and then you shall rejoice in these things no more. But when your joy is ended, then is the joy of saints perfected; they reap their harvest, when you leave your harvest; their consolation is everlasting.

7. God can separate your joy from these enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. It is one thing for a man to have riches and full barns, and another thing to have comfort in them, Eccl. v. 19, 20. But now the joy of Christians is a thing

inseparable from their enjoyment of Christ: indeed the sense of their interest may be lost, and so the acts of their joy intermitted; but they always have it in the seed, if not in the fruit, Psal. xcvii. 11. "Joy is sown for the upright;" he hath it still in the principle, and in the promise.

8. The joy of harvest-men, for the most part, is only in their harvest, and in such earthly things; take that away, and their joy ceases. Earthly hearts are acquainted with no higher comforts; but the people of God can joy in him, and take comfort in their earthly enjoyments too. And what comfort they take in these things, is much more refined and sweet than yours; for they enjoy all these things in God, and his love in giving them, puts a sweetness into them, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you see, how far your joys fall short of theirs.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for one that hath a full barn, but no Christ.

1. How have I rejoiced in a thing of nought, and pleased myself with a vanity? God hath blessed me in my fields, and in my stores; but not with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. My barns are full of corn, but my soul is empty of grace; common bounty hath given me a fulness of the things of this life; but what if the meaning of it should be to fat me for the day of slaughter? What if this be the whole of my portion from the Lord? What if the language of his providences to my soul should be this, Lo! here I have given thee (with Ishmael) the fatness of the earth? Thou shalt not say but thou hast tasted of thy Creator's bounty; but make the most of it, for this is all that ever thou shalt have from me; there be others in the world, to whom I have denied these things, but for them I have reserved better; for the most part they are poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Is not this enough to damp all my carnal mirth? Should my conscience give me such a memento as Abraham, in the parable, gave to Dives; "Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things." Ah! what a cut would that be to all my comforts? A man in a fever hath a lively colour, but a dying heart. I have an appearance, a shadow of comfort, but a sad state of soul.

A reflection for one that hath Christ, but no barn.

2. "Blessed be the God and Father of my Lord "Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiri-"tual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," Ephes. i. 3. Though he hath not seen fit to give me much of this world in hand, yet it hath pleased him to settle a rich inheritance upon me by promise; the hopes and expectations whereof yield my soul more true comfort than all the present enjoyments of this world could have done. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given me my portion in this life, that by keeping me from the enjoyment, hath also preserved me from the *snares* of a prosperous estate?

Lord Jesus, I have no bags, I have no barns; but thou shalt be to me instead of all those things. When others rejoice in the fulness of their earthly comforts, I will rejoice in the fulness of my Christ: they have that which (though I have not) I shall not want; and I have that which all their riches cannot purchase. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

A reflection for one that hath a full barn and Christ too.

3. But, Lord, how am I obliged, above thousands, to love and praise thee? to bless and admire thee, who hast not only plentifully provided for my soul, but for my body too! who hast given me both the upper and the nether springs, heaven and earth; things present, and things to come? Thou hast not dealt so with all; no, not with all of thy own people: many of them are strangers to the mercies which I enjoy. God hath done great things for me, O my soul! what wilt thou do for God? The freer the condition is he hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged for his service; and yet I doubt, it will be found, that many a poor Christian that labours with his hands to get his bread, redeems more hours for God than I do. Lord, make me wise to understand and answer the double end of this gracious dispensation! let me bestow the more of my time upon God, and stand ready to minister to the necessities of his people.

A reflection for one that hath neither a barn nor a Christ.

4. Oh! what an unhappy wretch am I! that have nothing either in hand, or in hope; am miserable here, and like to be so for ever; had I but an interest in Christ, as the godly poor have, that would sweeten all present troubles, and shew me the end of them. But, alas! I am poor and wicked, contemned of men, and abhorred of God; an object of contempt both to heaven and earth. Lord, look upon such a truly miserable object with compassion, give me a portion with thy people in the world to come, if thou never better my outward condition here! O sanctify this poverty; bless these straits and wants, that they may necessitate my soul to go to Christ: make this poverty the way to glory, and I shall bless thee to eternity that I was poor in this world.

THE POEM.

OFT have I seen, when harvest's almost in,
The last load coming, how some men have been
Wrapt up with joy, as if that welcome cart
Drew home the very treasure of their heart;
What joyful shoutings, hoopings, hollowing noise,
With mingled voices both of men and boys!
To carnal minds there is no greater mirth,
No higher joy, no greater heaven on earth.
He speaks pure paradoxes, that shall say
These are but trifles to what saints enjoy:

But they despise your sparks as much as you
Contemn their sun. Some that could never shew
A full stuff'd barn, on which you set your heart,
But glean, perhaps, the ears behind your cart;
Yet are the gleanings of their comfort more
Than all your harvest and admired store.
Your mirth is mix'd with sorrow, theirs is pure;
Yours like a shadow fleets, their joys endure.
God gives to you the husk, to them the pith,
And no heart-stinging sorrows adds therewith.
Though at the gates of death they sometimes mourn,
No sooner doth the Lord to them return,
But sorrow's banish'd from their pensive breast;
Joy triumphs there, and smiles their cheeks invest.
Have you beheld, when, with perfumed wings,
Out of the balmy east, bright Phœbus springs,
Mounting th' Olympic hill, with what a grace
He views the throne of darkness, and doth chase
The shades of night before him? having hurl'd
His golden beams about this lower world,
How from sad groves, and solitary cells,
Where horrid darkness and confusion dwells,
Batts, owls, and doleful creatures, fly away,
Resigning to the cheerful birds of day:
Who in those places now do sit and chant,
Where lately such dire creatures kept their haunt?
Thus grief resigns to joy; sighs, groans, and tears
To songs triumphant, when the Lord appears.
O matchless joy! O countenance divine!
What are those trifles to these smiles of thine?
May, I, with poor Mephibosheth, be blest
With these sweet smiles; let Ziba take the rest.
My life! my treasure! thou shalt ne'er be sold
For silver-hills, or rivers pav'd with gold.
Wert thou but known to worldlings, they would scorn
To stoop their hearts to such poor things as corn:
For so they do, because thou art above
That sphere wherein their low conceptions move.

CHAP. XIX.

Upon the threshing out of Corn.

More solid grain with greater strength you thresh,
The ablest Christians have the hardest lash.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN having to do with divers sorts of grain, some more tough and stubborn, others more free and tender, do not beat all alike on the threshing-floor; but as they have threshals of several sizes, so they bestow on some grain more, on others fewer strokes, according to the different qualities of the grain to be threshed. This observation the prophet Isaiah hath, chap. xxviii. ver. 27. "The fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is the "cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin, but the fitches are "beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod." The manner of beating out the corn in former times was far different from that which is now in use among us: they had the cart-wheel, which was full of iron spokes or teeth, and the hoofs of beasts for the harder sort of grain, as wheat, rye, and barley; a staff or flail for the fitches, and a rod or twig for the cummin; all which instruments were proportioned according to the nature of the grain.

APPLICATION.

GOD having to do, in a way of correction, with divers sorts of offenders, doth not use the like severity with them all, but proportions his corrections to their abilities and strength, Jer. xxx. 11. "I will not make a full end of thee, [but will correct thee in mea-"sure] and will not leave thee altogether unpunished:" (q. d.) Afflicted thou must be; my respect to my own glory, and thy good, puts a necessity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately: I will not lay on without measure or mercy, as I intend to do upon the enemies; but will mete out your sufferings in a due proportion, even as a careful physician, in prescribing pills or potions to his patient, hath regard as well to the ability of the patient, as to the nature and quality of the disease; even so thy God, O Israel, will not afflict thee according to the greatness of his power, and his wrath answerable thereunto, Psal. xc. 11. That would break thee to pieces, Psal. lxxviii. 38. Nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit of thy sin: as it shall be much less than what I could inflict, so it shall be less than thine iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13. Neither my power nor thy desert shall be the rule of my proceedings; but I will do it with moderation and mercy, as thou art able to bear. I that have instructed the husbandman to proportion his instrument to the quality of the grain before him, will exercise the like wisdom and mildness

towards thee. And the similitude betwixt the husbandman's threshing his corn, and the Lord's afflicting his people, stands in these particulars.

1. The husbandman's end in threshing the corn is, to separate it from the husks and chaff; and God's end in afflicting his people is, to separate them from their sins, Isa. xxvii. 9. "In measure when "it shooteth forth, he will debate with it," (i. e.) he will moderately correct them; and what the ends of those corrections are, the next words inform us, "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be "purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." God uses afflictions as we use soap, to cleanse away filthiness, and fetch out spots, Dan. xi. 35. He aims not at the destruction of their persons, but of their lusts.

2. If the husbandman have cockle, darnel, or pernicious tares before him on the floor among his corn, he little regards whether it be bruised or battered to pieces by the thresher or not; it is a worthless thing, and he spares it not. Such cockle and tares are the enemies of God; and when these come under his flail, he strikes them without mercy; for these the Lord prepares a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth, which shall beat them to dust, Isa. xli. 15. "The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor; it is time to "thresh her," Jer. li. 33. And when that time is come, then (in allusion to the beast that was to tread out the corn) "Zion's horn "shall be of iron, and her hoofs brass," Mic. iv. 13. He smites not his people according to the stroke of them that smote them; the meaning is, his strokes on them shall be deadly strokes: they shewed no mercy to Zion; and God will shew no mercy to them.

3. When the husks and chaff are perfectly separated from the grain, then the husbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and separated the sins of his people, then afflictions shall come to a perpetual end; he will never smite them again: there is no noise of the threshing instrument in heaven; he that best them with his flail on earth, will put them into his bosom in heaven.

4. Though the husbandman lays on, and beats his corn as if he was angry with it, yet he loves and highly prizes it; and though God strike and afflict his people, yet he sets a great value upon them; and it is equally absurd to infer God's hatred to his people from his afflicting of them, as the husbandman's hatred of his corn, because he threshes and beats it; Heb. xii. 6. "Whom the Lord loveth "he correcteth, and chasteneth every son whom he receiveth."

5. Though the husbandman thresh and beat the corn, yet he will not bruise or hurt it, if he can help it; though some require more and harder strokes than others, yet none shall have more than it can endure. And though the Lord afflict his servants, yet he will do them no hurt, Jer. xxv. 6. Some need more rods than others, but none shall have more than they can bear; the Lord knows the mea-

sures and degrees of his servants faith and patience, and accordingly shall their trials be, Psal. ciii. 13, 14. "Like as a father pities his "children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows "their frame, he remembers they are but dust;" "He makes a "way to escape, that they may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13. This care and tenderness over his afflicted, is eminently discovered in three particulars.

(1.) In not exposing them to, until he hath prepared them for, their trials, Luke xxiv. 49. "Tarry ye at Jerusalem, until ye be "endued with power from on high." He gives them sometimes eminent discoveries of his love immediately before, and as a preparative to their sufferings, in the strength whereof they are carried through all.

(2.) Or if not so, then he intermixeth supporting comfort with their troubles; as you sometimes see the sun shine out while the rain falls. It was so with Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. "This night, (and "it was a sad night indeed) there stood by me the angel of the Lord, "whose I am."

(3.) In taking off the affliction when they can bear it no longer; 1 Cor. x. 13. "He makes a way to escape, that they may be able to "bear it;" Psal. cxxv. 3. The rod is taken off, "when the righ-"teous is even ready to put forth his hand to iniquity." It is a Jewish proverb, When the bricks are doubled, then comes Moses. And it is a Christian's experience, When the spirit is ready to fail, then comes Jesus, according to that promise, Isa. lvii. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for persecutors. 1. How unlike am I to God, in the afflicting of his people? The Lord is pitiful when he smites them, but I have been cruel: he is kind to them, when most severe; but the best of my kindness to them, may fitly enough be called severity: God smites them in love; I have smitten them in hatred. Ah! what have I done? God hath used me as his hand, Psal. xvii. 14. or as his rod to afflict them, Jer. x. 7. but his end and mine have widely differed in that action, Isa. x. 7. I am but the scullion, or rather the whisp to scour and cleanse the vessels of glory; and when I have done that dirty work, those bright souls shall be set up in heaven, and I cast into the fire. If he shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy, how can I expect mercy from the Lord, whose people I have persecuted mercilessly for his sake?

A reflection for such as meet with no affliction. 2. Is the Lord's wheat thus threshed on the floor of afflictions; what then shall I think of my condition, who prosper and am let alone in the way of sin? Surely the Lord looks on me as on a weed, and not as his corn; and it is too probable, that I am rather reserved for burning, than for threshing.

Some there are whom God loves not so well as to spend a rod upon them, but saith, "Let them alone," Hos. iv. 17. but miserable is their condition, notwithstanding their impunity! For what is the interpretation but this? I will come to a reckoning with them altogether in hell. Lord, how much better is thy afflicting mercy, than thy sparing severity! Better is the condition of an afflicted child, than of a rejected bastard, Heb. xii. 7. Oh, let me rather feel thy rod now, as the rod of a loving Father, than feel thy wrath hereafter, as the wrath of an omnipotent avenger!

3. Well then, despond not, O my soul! Thou hearest the husbandman loves his corn, though he thresheth it; and surely, the Lord loves thee not the less, because he afflicts thee so much. If affliction then be the way to heaven, blessed be God for affliction! The threshing-strokes of God have come thick upon me; by which I may see what a tough and stubborn heart I have: if one stroke would have done the work, he would not have lifted up his hand the second time. I have not had a stroke more than I had need of, 1 Pet. i. 6. and by this means he will purge my sins: blessed be God for that! the damned have infinitely more and harder strokes than I, and yet their sin shall never be separated by their sufferings. Ah sin! cursed sin! I am so much out of love with thee, that I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee: all this I suffer for thy sake; but the time is coming when I shall be rid of sin and suffering together: meanwhile I am under my own father's hand: smite me he may, but hate me he cannot. *A reflection for an afflicted saint.*

THE POEM.

THE sacred records tell us, heretofore
God had an altar on a threshing-floor,
Where threshing instruments devoted were
To sacred service; so you find them here.
I now would teach the thresher to beat forth
A notion from his threshold much more worth
Than all his corn; and make him understand
That soul-instructing engine in his hand.
With fewer strokes, and lighter will you beat
The oats and barley than the stubborn wheat,
Which will require and endure more blows
Than freer grain. Thus deals the Lord by those
Whom he afflicts: he doth not use to strike
Offending children with his rod alike;
But on the ablest shoulders doth impose
The heaviest burthens, and the less on those
Of weaker grace; he shews himself a God
Of judgments in his handling of the rod.

God hath a rate-book by him wherein he
Keeps just accounts how rich his people be;
What faith, experience, patience, more or less
Each one possesseth, and doth them assess
According to their stock. Such as have not
A martyr's faith, shall have no martyr's lot.
The kinds, degrees, and the continuance
Of all their suff'rings to a circumstance
Prescribed are by him who wisely sways
The world, and more than's right on no man lays.
Be man or devil the apothecary,
God's the Physician: who can then miscarry
In such a hand? He never did or will
Suffer the least addition to his bill.
Nor measure, nor yet mercy he observes
In threshing Babylon; for she deserves
His heaviest strokes; and in his floor she must
Be beaten shortly with his flail to dust.
But Zion's God, in measure, will debate;
His children he may smite, but cannot hate;
He beats them, true, to make their chaff to fly,
That they, like purged golden grains, may lie
In one fair heap, with those bless'd souls that here
Once in like manner thresh'd and winnow'd were.

CHAP. XX.

Upon the winnowing of Corn.

The fan doth cause light chaff to fly away;
So shall th' ungodly in God's winnowing-day.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the corn is threshed out in the floor where it lies mingled with empty ears, and worthless chaff, the husbandman carries it out altogether into some open place; where, having spread his sheet for the preservation of the grain, he exposes it all to the wind; the good, by reason of its solidity, remains upon the sheet, but the chaff, being light and empty, is partly carried quite away by the wind, and all the rest separated from the good grain into a distinct heap, which is carried away either to the fire, or dung-hill, as a worthless thing.

APPLICATION.

MEN have their winnowing-days, and God hath his; a day to separate the chaff from the wheat, the godly from the un-

godly who shall be held up to the wind; but only the wicked shall be driven away by it. Such a day God hath in this world, wherein he winnows his wheat, and separates the chaff. There is a double fanning or winnowing of men here in this world; one is *doctrinally*, in which sense I understand that scripture, Matth. iii. 12. spoken of Christ, when he was entering upon his ministerial work: "His fan "is in his hand; and he shall thoroughly purge his floor, and gather "his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with un- "quenchable fire." The preaching of the gospel is as a fan in Christ's hand: and it is as much as if John had thus told the Jews, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a name and place among the people of God, and gloried in their church-privileges; yet there is a purging blast of truth coming which shall make them fly out of the church, as chaff out of the floor. Thus Christ winnows or fans the world *doctrinally:* the other is *judiciously*, by bringing sore and grievous trials and sufferings upon the churches for this very end, that those which are but chaff, i. e. empty and vain professors, may by such winds as these be separated from his people.

The church increases two ways, and by two diverse means; *extensively*, in breadth and numbers; and *intensively*, in vigour and power; peace and prosperity cause the first, sufferings and adversity the last: And well may a day of persecution be called a winnowing-day, for then are the people of God tossed to purpose, as corn in the sieve, though nothing but chaff be lost thereby. Of such a winnowing-day the prophet speaks, Amos ix. 9, 10. "I will sift the "house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, "yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth; all the sinners "of my people shall die." q. d. I will cause great agitations and tossings among you by the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, into whose countries you shall be dispersed and scattered; yet I will so govern those your dispersions by my *providence*, that not one good grain, one upright soul, shall eternally perish, but the sinners of my people, the refuse stuff, that shall perish.

To the same purpose speaks another prophet, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Ga- "ther yourselves together, (or as some read) fan yourselves, yea, fan "yourselves, before the decree bring forth, and the day pass as the "chaff." He doth not mean that the time shall pass as the chaff, but there is the day of affliction and distress coming, in which the wicked shall pass as the chaff before the wind; and yet, notwithstanding all these winnowings upon earth, much chaff will still abide among the corn; therefore God hath appointed another day for the winnowing of the world, even the day of judgment; in reference to which it is said, Psalm i. 4, 5. "The ungodly are not so, but are "like the chaff which the wind drives away; therefore the ungod- "ly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of "the righteous;" i. e. God hath a day wherein he will sift the

world like corn in a sieve, and then the wicked shall appear to be but chaff, which God will eternally separate from his wheat. I will not strain the similitude, but fairly display it in these seven particulars.

1. The chaff and wheat grow together in the same field, and upon the same root and stalk. In this wicked men are like chaff, who not only associate with the people of God, but oftentimes spring up with them in the same family, and from the same root or immediate parents, Mal. i. 2. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Yet the one was wheat, the other chaff. Instances of this are infinite.

2. The husbandman would never endure the husks, chaff, and dry stalks to remain in the field; if it were not for the good corn's sake, he would quickly set fire to it, but that the corn is among it, which he highly prizeth: And be assured, God would never suffer the wicked to abide long in this world, were it not for his own elect that are dispersed among them: Except the Lord had such a remnant dispersed in the world, he would quickly set fire to the four quarters of it, and make it like Sodom, Isa. i. 9.

3. The chaff is a very worthless thing, the husbandman cares not what become of it; and of as little worth are wicked men, Prov. x. 20. "The heart of the wicked is little worth." The heart is the principal part of the man, and yet that is but chaff, no worth in it; his hands, his clothes, &c. are worth somewhat, but his heart is worth nothing.

4. Though chaff in itself be nothing worth, yet it is of some use to the corn while it is standing in the field; the stalk bears up the ear, and the chaff covers the grain, and defends it from the injury of the weather. Thus God makes wicked men of use to his people in outward society; they help to support and protect them in this world, Rev. xii. 16. "The earth helped the woman," i. e. worldly men for carnal ends helped the church, when a flood of persecution was poured out. The church often helps the world, it receives many benefits from the people of God; and sometimes God over-rules the world to help his church.

5. When the chaff and wheat are both brought forth and held up to the wind in one sieve, they fall two ways; the wheat falls down upon the floor or sheet, the chaff is carried quite away: So that although for a time godly and ungodly abide together, yet when this winnowing-time comes, God's wheat shall be gathered into his garner in heaven, the chaff shall go the other way, Mat. iii. 12.

6. If there be any chaff among the corn, it will appear when it is sifted in a windy day; it cannot possibly escape if it be well winnowed; much more impossible it is for any wicked man to escape the critical search of God in that day; the closet hypocrite shall then be detected, for God will judge the secrets of men, 2 Cor. xvi. "He will "then bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make mani- "fest the counsels of the heart," 1 Cor. iv. 5.

7. *Lastly*, After corn and chaff are separated by the winnowing wind, they shall never lie together in one heap any more: The wicked shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but themselves thrust out: There is no chaff in heaven.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Am I an empty vain professor, that wants the pith and substance of real godliness? Then am I but chaff in God's account, though I grow among his corn; the eye of man cannot discern my hypocrisy; but when he comes, whose fan is in his hand, then how plainly will it be detected? Angels and men shall discern it, and say, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his hope;" How shall I abide the day of his coming? Christ is the great heart-anatomist: Things shall not be carried then by names and parties, as they are now; every one shall be weighed in a just balance, and a *Mene Tekel* written upon every false heart: Great will be the perspicuity of that trial: My own conscience shall join with my judge, and shall then acknowledge, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that sea of wrath; and though I am damned, yet I am not wronged. The chaff cannot stand before the wind, nor I before the judgment of Christ. *A reflection for a close hypocrite.*

2. Is there such a fanning-time coming? Why do not I then sift my heart every day by serious self-examination? No work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my soul! thou hadst been better employed in searching thine own estate in reference to that day, than in prying sinfully into the hearts, and censuring the conditions of other men: Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be condemned with the world; the work indeed is difficult, but the neglect dangerous: Were I within a few days to stand at man's bar, there to be tried for my life, how busy should I be every hour of the day in writing to any that I thought could befriend me, and studying every advantage to myself? And yet what a vast difference is there betwixt man's bar and God's? Betwixt a trial for my life, and for my soul? Lord, rouse up my sluggish heart by awful and solicitous thoughts of that day, lest I be found amongst that chaff which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire. *A reflection for one that neglects self-examination.*

5. Fear not, O my soul! though there be a blast coming which shall drive all the chaff into hell, yet it shall blow thee no harm. "I know "that when he hath tried me, I shall come forth "as gold," Job xxiii. 10. I confess I have too much chaff about me, but yet I am not altogether chaff; there is a solid work of grace upon my soul that will abide the trial: Let the judgment to come be as impartial and exact as it is possible to be, yet a grain of sincerity *A reflection for a sincere soul.*

cannot be lost in it: for "God will not cast away a perfect (i. e. an upright-hearted) man," Job viii. 20. He that is appointed to judge the world is mine! and his imputed righteousness will make me full weight in the balance. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for sincerity! this will abide, when common gifts and empty names will flee as the chaff before the wind.

THE POEM.

THE winnowing wind first drives the chaff away,
Next light and hollow grains; those only stay
Whose weight and solid substance can endure
This trial, and such grains are counted pure.
The corn for use is carefully preserv'd;
The useless chaff for burning flames reserv'd.
No wind but blows some good, a proverb is;
Glad shall I be if it hold true in this.
O that the wind, when you to winnowing go,
This spiritual good unto your souls might blow!
To make you pause, and sadly ruminate,
In what a doleful plight and wretched state
Their poor souls are who cannot hope to stand
When he shall come, whose fan is in his hand;
His piercing eyes infallibly disclose
The very reins, and inward part of those
Whose out-side seeming grace so neatly paints,
That, with the best, they pass for real saints.
No hypocrite with God acceptance finds,
But, like the chaff, dispers'd by furious winds.
Their guilt shall not that searching day endure,
Nor they approach the assemblies of the pure.
Have you observ'd in autumn, thistle-down,
By howling Æolus scatter'd up and down
About the fields? Ev'n so God's ireful storm
Shall chase the hypocrite, who now can scorn
The breath of close reproofs; and like a rock,
Repel reproofs, and just reprovers mock.
How many that in splendid garments walk,
Of high professions, and like angels talk,
Shall God divest, and openly proclaim
Their secret guilt to their eternal shame?
This is the day wherein the Lord will rid
His church of those false friends, who now lie hid
Among his people; there will not one
False heart remain, to lose our love upon.
O bless'd assembly! glorious state! when all
In their uprightness walk, and ever shall.

O make my heart sincere, that I may never
Prove such light chaff as then thy wind shall sever
From solid grain! O let my soul detest
Unsoundness, and abide thy strictest test!

AN

INTRODUCTION

To the Second Part of

HUSBANDRY.

HOW is it, reader, have I tired thee,
Whilst through these pleasant fields thou walk'st with me?
Our path was pleasant; but if length of way
Do weary thee, we'll slack our pace and stay:
Let's sit a while, under the cooling shade
Of fragrant trees; trees were for shadow made.
Lo here a pleasant grove, whose shade is good;
But more than so, 'twill yield us fruit for food:
No dangerous fruits do on these branches grow,
No snakes among the verdant grass below;
Here we'll repose a while, and then go view
The pleasant herds and flocks; and so adieu.

CHAP. I.

Upon the Ingraffing of Fruit-trees.

Ungraffed trees can never bear good fruit;
Nor we, till graffed on a better root.

OBSERVATION.

A WILD tree naturally springing up in the wood or hedge, and never graffed or removed from its native soil, may bear some fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the eye; but it will give you no content at all in eating, being always harsh, sour, and unpleasant to the taste; but if such a stock be removed into a good soil, and graffed with a better kind, it may become a good tree, and yield store of choice and pleasant fruit.

APPLICATION.

UNREGENERATE men, who never were accquainted with the mystery of spiritual union with Jesus Christ, but still grow upon

on their natural root, old Adam, may, by the force and power of natural principles, bring forth some fruit, which, like the wild hedge-fruit we speak of, may, indeed, be fair and pleasant to the eyes of men, but God takes no pleasure at all in it; it is sour, harsh, and distasteful to him, because it springs not from the Spirit of Christ, Isa. i. 13. "I cannot away with it, it is iniquity," &c. But that I may not entangle the thread of my discourse, I shall (as in the former chapters) set before you a parallel betwixt the best fruits of natural men, and those of a wild ungraffed tree.

1. The root that bears this wild fruit is a degenerate root, and that is the cause of all this sourness and harshness in the fruit it bears; it is the seed of some better tree accidentally blown, or cast into some waste and bad soil, where not being manured and ordered aright, it is turned wild: So all the fruits of unregenerate men flow from the first Adam, a corrupt and degenerate root; he was indeed planted a right seed, but soon turned a wild and degenerate plant; he being the root from which every man naturally springs, corrupts all the fruit that any man bears from him. It is observed by Gregory pertinently to my present purpose, *Genus humanum in parente primo, velut in radice putruit:* Mankind was putrified in the root of its first parent; Matth. vii. 18. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

2. This corrupt root spoils the fruit, by the transmission of its sour and naughty sap into all the branches and fruits that grow upon it; they suck no other nourishment, but what the root affords them, and that being bad, spoils all; for the same cause and reason, no mere natural or unregenerate man can ever do one holy or acceptable action, because the corruption of the root is in all those actions. The necessity of our drawing corruption into all our actions, from this cursed root Adam, is expressed by a quick and smart interrogation, Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an "unclean? Not one." The sense of it is well delivered us (by Mr. Caryl, *in loc.*) This question (saith he) may undergo a twofold construction. First, thus, Who can bring a morally clean person out of a person originally unclean? and so he lays his hand upon his birth-sin. Or, Secondly, which speaks to my purpose, it may refer to the action of the same man; man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; i. e. a clean or holy action; that which is originated is like its original. And that this sour sap of the first stock (I mean Adam's sin) is transmitted into all mankind, not only corrupting their fruit, but ruining and withering all the branches, the apostle shews us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two Adam's, Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore, as by one man [one, not only *in individuo, sed* "*in specie*, one representing the whole root or stock,] sin entered "into the world:" not by imitation only, but by propagation; and this brought death and ruin upon all the branches.

3. Although these wild hedge-fruits be unwholesome and unpleasant to the taste, yet they are fair and beautiful to the eye: a man

that looks upon them, and doth not know what fruit it is, would judge it by its shew and colour, to be excellent fruit; for it makes a fairer shew oftentimes than the best and most wholesome fruit doth: even so, these natural gifts and endowments which some unregenerate persons have, seem exceeding fair to the eye, and a fruit to be desired. What excellent qualities have some mere natural men and women! what a winning affability, humble condescension, meekness, righteousness, ingenuous tenderness and sweetness of nature! As it was (hyperbolically enough) said of one, *In hoc homine, non peccavit Adam:* Adam never sinned in this man; meaning that he excelled the generality of Adam's children in sweetness of temper and natural endowments. What curious phantasies, nimble wits, solid judgments, tenacious memories, rare elocution, &c. are to be found among mere natural men! by which they are assisted in discoursing, praying, preaching and writing to the admiration of such as know them. But that which is highly esteemed of men, is abomination to God, Luke xvi. 15. It finds no acceptance with him, because it springs from that cursed root of nature, and is not the production of his own Spirit.

4. If such a stock were removed into a better soil, and graffed with a better kind, it might bring forth fruit pleasant and grateful to the husbandman; and if such persons (before described) were but regenerated and changed in their spirits and principles, what excellent and useful persons would they be in the church of God? And then their fruits would be sweet and acceptable to him. One observes of Tertullian, Origen, and Jerom, that they came into Canaan laden with Egyptian gold, i. e. they came into the church full of excellent human learning, which did Christ much service.

5. When the husbandman cuts down his woods or hedges, he cuts down these crab stocks with the rest, because he values them not any more than the thorns and brambles among which they grow; and as little will God regard or spare these natural branches, how much soever they are laden with such fruit. The threatening is universal, John iii. 3. "Except you be regenerate, and born again, "you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." And again, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man (be his natural gifts never so ex- "cellent) shall see God." Embellished nature, is nature still; "That which is born of the flesh, is *but* flesh," however it be set off with advantage to the eye of man.

REFLECTIONS.

1. To what purpose then do I glory in my natural accomplishments? Though I have a better nature than some others have, yet it is a cursed nature still. These sweet qualities and excellent gifts, do only hide, but not kill the corruption of nature, I am but a rotten post gilded over, and all my duties but hedge-fruit, which

A reflection for an accomplished naturalist.

God makes no account of. O cunning thought! that the unlearned shall rise and take heaven, when I with all my excellent gifts shall descend into hell. Heaven was not made for scholars, as such, but for believers; as one said, when they comforted him upon his death-bed, that he was a knowing man, *a doctor of divinity;* O, said he, I shall not appear before God as a *doctor*, but as a man; I shall stand upon a level with the most illiterate in the day of judgment. What doth it avail me that I have a nimble wit, whilst I have none to do myself good? Will my judge be charmed with a rhetorical tongue? Things will not be carried in that world, as they are in this. If I could, with Berengarius, discourse *de omni scibili*, of every thing that is knowable; or with Solomon, unravel nature from the *cedar*, to the *hyssop*, what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of Christ, and the mystery of regeneration? My head hath often ached with study, but when did my heart ach for sin? Methinks, O my soul! thou trimmest up thyself in these natural ornaments, to appear before God, as much as that delicate Agag did, when he was to come before Samuel, and fondly conceited that these things would procure favour, or, at least, pity from him; but yet think not, for all that, *the bitterness of death is past:* Say not within thyself, will God cast such a one as I into hell? Shall a man of such parts be damned? Alas? Justice will hew thee to pieces, as Samuel did that spruce king, and not abate thee the least for these things; many thousand branches of nature, as fair and fruitful as thyself, are now blazing in hell, because not transplanted by regeneration into Christ: and if he spared not them, neither will he spare thee.

A reflection for a true, but weak believer.

2. I am a poor despised shrub which have no beauty at all in me, and yet such a one hath the Lord chosen to transplant into Christ, whilst he left many fragrant branches standing on their native stock, to be fuel of his wrath to all eternity! O grace! for ever to be admired! Ah! what cause have I to be thankful to free grace, and for ever to walk humbly with my God! the Lord hath therefore chosen an unlikely, rugged and unpolished creature as I am, that pride may for ever be hid from mine eyes, and that I may ever glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29. I now have the advantage of a better root and soil than any carnal person hath; it will therefore be a greater shame to me, and a reproach to the root that bears me, if I should be outstripped and excelled by them; yet, Lord, how often do I find it so? I see some of them meek and patient, whilst I am rough and surly; generous and noble, whilst I am base and penurious. Truly such a branch as I am, is no honour to the root that bears it.

THE POEM.

I AM a branch of that fair Eden tree
Which to mankind God hath ordain'd to be

The common stock: his situation good,
His branches many, of himself a wood;
And like a cedar by the river fed,
Unto the clouds his ample branches spread:
Sin smote his root, then justice cut him down,
And levell'd with the earth his lofty crown.
What hope of branches when the tree's o'erturn'd,
But like dry faggots to be bound and burn'd?
It had been so, had not transcendent love,
Which in a sphere above our thoughts doth move,
Prepar'd a better stock to save and nourish
Transplanted twigs, which in him thrive and flourish.
In Adam all are curs'd; no saving fruit
Shall ever spring from that sin-blasted root;
Yea, all the branches that in him are found,
How flourishing soever, must be bound
And pil'd together (horrid news to tell!)
To make an everlasting blaze in hell.
God takes no pleasure in the sweetest bud
Disclos'd by nature; for the root's not good,
Some boughs, indeed, richly adorned are
With natural fruits, which to the eye are fair;
Rare gifts, sweet dispositions which attract
The love of thousands, and from most exact
Honour and admiration. You'll admire
That such as these are fuel for the fire.
Indeed, ten thousand pities 'tis to see
Such lovely creatures in this case to be.
Did they by true regeneration draw
The sap of life from Jesse's root, the law,
By which they now to wrath condemned are,
Would cease to curse, and God such buds would spare:
But out of him there's none of these can move
His unrelenting heart, or draw his love.
Then cut me off from this accursed tree,
Lest I for ever be cut off from thee.

CHAP. II.

Upon the union of the Graff with the Stock.

Whene'er you bud and graff, therein you see,
How Christ and souls must here united be.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the husbandman hath prepared his graffs in the season of the year, he carries them, with the tools that are necessary for that work, to the tree or stock he intends to ingraff, and

having cut off the top of the limb in some smooth part, he cleaves it with his knife or chisel a little beside the pith, knocks in his wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the graff) he carefully sets it into the cleft, joining the inner side of the barks of graff and stock together (there being the main current of the sap) then pulls out his wedge, binds both together (as in barking) and clays it up, to defend the tender graff and wounded stock from the injuries of the sun and rain.

These tender cyons quickly take hold of the stock, and having immediate coalition with it, drink in its sap, concoct it into their own nourishment, thrive better, and bear more and better fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural root; yea, the smallest bud, being carefully inoculated and bound close to the stock, will, in a short time, become a flourishing and fruitful limb.

APPLICATION.

THIS carries a most sweet and lively resemblance of the soul's union with Christ by faith; and indeed there is nothing in nature that shadows forth this great gospel-mystery like it: It is a thousand pities that any who are employed about, or are but spectators of such an action, should terminate their thoughts (as too many do) in that natural object, and not raise up their hearts to these heavenly meditations, which it so fairly offers them.

1. When a twig is to be ingraffed, or a bud inoculated, it is first cut off by a keen knife from the tree on which it naturally grew.

And when the Lord intends to graff a soul into Christ, the first work about it, is cutting work, Acts ii. 37. their hearts were cut by conviction, and deep compunction; no cyon is ingraffed without cutting, no soul united with Christ, without a cutting sense of sin and misery, John xvi. 8, 9.

2. When the tender shoot is cut off from the tree, there are, ordinarily, many more left behind upon the same tree, as promising and vigorous as that which is taken; but it pleaseth the husbandman to chuse this, and leave them.

Even so it is in the removing or transplanting of a soul by conversion; it leaves many behind it in the state of nature, as likely and promising as itself; but so it pleaseth God to take this soul, and leave many others; yea, often such as grew upon the same root; I mean, the immediate parent, Mal. i. 2. "Was not Esau Jacob's "brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau."

3. When the graffs are cut off, in order to this work, it is a critical season with them: if they lie too long before they are ingraffed, or take not with the stock, they die, and are never more to be recovered; they may stand in the stock a while, but are no part of the tree.

So when souls are under a work of conviction, it is a critical time with them; many a one have I known then to miscarry, and never recover again: they have indeed for a time stood like dead graffs

in the stock, by an external dead-hearted profession, but never came to any thing; and as such dead graffs, either fall off from the stock, or moulder away upon it; so do these, 1 John ii. 19.

4. The husbandman, when he hath cut off graffs, or tender buds, makes all the convenient speed he can to close them with the stock; the sooner that is done, the better; they get no good by remaining as they are. And truly it concerns the servants of the Lord, who are employed in this work of ingraffing souls into Christ, to make all the haste they can to bring the convicted sinner to a closure with Christ. As soon as ever the trembling jailor cried, "What shall I do to be "saved?" Paul and Silas immediately direct him to Christ, Acts xvi. 30, 31. They do not say, it is too soon for thee to act faith on Christ, thou are not yet humbled enough, but "believe in the Lord Jesus "Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

5. There must be an incision made in the stock before any bud can be inoculated; or the stock must be cut and cleaved, before the cyon can be ingraffed; according to that in the poet,

Venerit insitio, fac ramum ramus adoptet; i. e.
To graffs no living sap the stocks impart,
Unless you wound and cut them near the heart.

Such an incision, or wound, was made upon Christ, in order to our ingrafting into him, John xix. 34. the opening of that deadly wound gives life to the souls of believers.

6. The graff is intimately united, and closely conjoined with the stock; the conjunction is so close, that they become one tree.

There is also a most close and intimate union betwixt Christ and the soul that believeth in him. It is emphatically expressed by the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The word imports the nearest, closest, and strictest union. Christ and the soul cleave together in a blessed oneness, as those things do that are glued one to another; so that look as the graff is really in the stock, and the spirit or sap of the stock is really in the graff; so a believer is really (though mystically) in Christ, and the Spirit of Christ is really communicated to a believer. "I live, (saith Paul) "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. "He that dwelleth "in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16.

7. Graffs are bound to the stock by bands made of hay or flags, these keep it steady, else the wind would loose it out of the stock.

The believing soul is also fastened to Christ by bands, which will secure it from all danger of being loosed off from him any more. There are two bands of this union; the Spirit on God's part, this is the firm bond of union, without which we could never be made one with Christ, Rom. viii. 9. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, "he is none of his;" and *faith* on our part, Eph. iii. 17. "That "Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith." These hold strongly.

8. Though the stock be one and the same, yet all graffs do not

thrive and flourish alike in it; some outgrow the rest, and those that grow not so well as the others do, the fault is in them, and not in the stock: so it is with souls really united to Christ; all do not flourish alike in him, the faith of some grows exceedingly, 2 Thess. i. 3. the things that be in others are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. and such souls must charge the fault upon themselves. Christ sends up living sap enough, not only to make all that are in him living, but fruitful branches.

REFLECTIONS.

Four comfortable reflections for a regenerate soul.

1. Is it so indeed betwixt Christ and my soul, as it is betwixt the ingraffed cyon and the stock? What honour and glory then hath Christ conferred upon me, a poor unworthy creature! What! to be made one with him, to be a living branch of him, to be joined thus to the Lord! Oh! what a preferment is this! It is but a little while since I was a wild and cursed plant, growing in the wilderness amongst them that shall shortly be cut down and faggotted up for hell; for me to be taken from amongst them, and planted into Christ. O my soul! fall down and kiss the feet of free grace, that moved so freely towards so vile a creature! The dignities and honours of the kings and nobles of the earth, are nothing to mine. It was truly confessed by one of them, that it is a greater honour to be a member of Christ, than the head of an empire. Do I say, a greater honour than is put upon the kings of the earth? I might have said, it is a greater honour than is put upon the angels of heaven: For "to whom of them said Christ, at any time, thou "art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh? Behold what manner "of love is this!" 1 John iii. 1.

2. Look again upon the ingraffed cyons, O my soul! and thou shalt find, that when once they have taken hold of the stock, they live as long as there is any sap in the root; and because he liveth, I shall live also, for my life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. The graff is preserved in the stock, and my soul is even so preserved "in Christ Jesus!" Jude, ver. 1.

3. Am I joined to the Lord as a mystical part or branch of him? How dear art thou then, O my soul, to the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ! What! a branch of his dear Son! What can God with-hold from one so ingraffed? Eph. i. 6. "All is yours, "(saith my God) for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 23.

4. Once more, draw matter of instruction as well as comfort from this sweet observation: seeing God hath put all this honour upon thee, by this most intimate union with his Christ, look to it, my soul, that thou live and walk as becomes a soul thus one with the Lord: be thou tender over his glory: doth not that which strikes at the root, strike at the very life of the graff? And shall not that which strikes

at the very glory of Christ, tenderly touch and affect thee? Yea, be thou tenderly affected with all the reproaches that fall upon him from abroad, but especially with those that redound to him from thine own unfruitfulness. Oh! disgrace not the root that bears thee! let it never be said, that any evil fruit is found upon a branch that lives and is fed by such a root.

THE POEM.

OH! what considering serious man can see
The close conjunction of the graff and tree;
And whilst he contemplates, he doth not find
This meditation graffed on his mind?
I am the branch, and Christ the vine;
Thy gracious hand did pluck
Me from that native stock of mine,
That I his sap might suck.
The bloody spear did in his heart
A deep incision make,
That grace to me he might impart,
And I therefore partake.
The Spirit and faith are that firm band
Which binds us fast together;
Thus we are clasped hand in hand,
And nothing can us sever.
Bless'd be that hand which did remove
Me from my native place!
This was the wonder of thy love,
The triumph of thy grace!
That I, a wild and cursed plant
Should thus preferred be,
Who all those ornaments do want,
Thou may'st in others see.
As long as e'er the root doth live,
The branches are not dry;
Whilst Christ hath grace and life to give,
My soul can never die.
O blessed Saviour! never could
A graff cleave to the tree
More close than thy poor creature would
United be with thee.
My soul, dishonour not the root,
'Twill be a shame for thee
To want the choicest sorts of fruit,
And yet thus graffed be.

Thus you may shake from graffs, before they blow,
More precious fruit than e'er on trees did grow.

CHAP. III.

Upon the Gathering in of Fruits in Autumn.

When trees are shak'd, but little fruit remains,
Just such a remnant to the Lord pertains.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a pleasant sight in autumn to see the fruitful branches hanging full of clusters, which weigh the boughs to the ground.

Aspice curvatos pomorum pondere ramos,
Ut sua quod peperit vix ferat arbor onus.

Which I may thus English.

O what a pleasant sight it is to see,
The fruitful clusters bowing down the tree!

But these laden branches are soon eased of their burden; for as soon as they are ripe, the husbandman ascends the tree, and shaking the limbs with all his might, causes a fruitful shower to fall like hail-stones upon the ground below; which being gathered to a heap, are carried to the pound, broken all to pieces in a trough, and squeezed to a dry lump in the press, whence all their juice and moisture runs into the fat. How few escape this fat of all those multitudes that grow in the orchard? If you look upon the trees, you may possibly see here one, and there another, two or three upon the utmost branches, but nothing in comparison to the vast number that are thus used.

APPLICATION.

THESE small remains of fruit, which are either left upon the tree, or gathered in for an hoard, do well resemble that small number of God's elect in the world, which free-grace hath reserved out of the general ruin of mankind. Four things are excellently shadowed forth to us by this similitude.

1. You see in a fruitful autumn, the trees even oppressed and overladen with the weight of their own fruits, before the shaking time comes, and then they are eased of their burden. Thus the whole creation groans under the weight of their sins, who inhabit it, Rom. viii. 22. the creatures are in bondage, and by an elegant Prosopopeia, are said, both to groan and wait for deliverance. The orignial sin of man brought an original curse, which burdens the creature, Gen. iii. 17. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; and the actual sin of man "brings actual curses upon the creature, Psalm cvii. 34. Thus the inhabitants of the world load and burden it, as the limbs of a tree are burdened, and sometimes broken with the weight of their own fruit.

2. You may observe in your orchards, every year, what abundance of fruits daily fall, either by storms, or of their own accord; but when the shaking time comes, then the ground is covered all over

with fruit. Thus it is with the world, that mystical tree, with respect to men that inhabit it; there is not a year, a day, or hour, in which some drop not, as it were, of their own accord, by a natural death; and sometimes wars and epidemical plagues blow down thousands together into their graves; these are as high winds in a fruitful orchard; but when the shaking time, the autumn of the world, comes, then all its inhabitants shall be shaken down together, either by death, or a translation equivalent thereunto.

3. When fruits are shaken down from their trees, then the husbandman separates them; the far greater part for the pound, and some few reserved for an hoard, which are brought to his table, and eaten with pleasure. This excellently shadows forth that great separation, which Christ will make in the end of the world, when some shall be cast into the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath, and others preserved for glory.

4. Those fruits which are preserved on the tree, or in the hoard, are comparatively, but an handful to those that are broken in the pound; alas! it is scarce one of a thousand, and such a small remnant of elected souls hath God reserved for glory.

I look upon the world as a great tree, consisting of four large limbs or branches; this branch or division of it on which we grow, hath, doubtless, a greater number of God's elect upon it than the other three; and yet, when I look with a serious and considering eye upon this fruitful European branch, and see how much rotten and withered fruit there grows upon it, it makes me say, as Chrysostom did of his populous Antioch; Ah, how small a remnant hath *Jesus Christ* among these vast numbers! "Many indeed are called, but ah! how "few are chosen?" Mat. xx. 16. Alas! they are but as the gleanings when the vintage is done; here and there one upon its utmost branches: to allude to that, Isa. xvii. 6. It was a sad observation which that searching scholar, Mr. Brerewood, long since made upon the world; that, dividing it into thirty equal parts, he found no less than nineteen of them wholly overspread with idolatry and heathenish darkness; and of the eleven remaining parts, no less than six are Mahometans; so that there remains but five of thirty which profess the Christian religion at large; and the far greater part of these remaining five are inveloped and drowned in popish darkness! so that you see the reformed Protestant religion is confined to a small spot of ground indeed. Now, if from these we subtract all the grossly ignorant, openly profane, merely civil, and secretly hypocritical, judge then in yourselves, how small a scantling of the world falls to Christ's share.

Well might Christ say, Mat. vii. 14. "Narrow is the way, and "strait is the gate that leadeth unto life: and few there be that find "it;" And again, Luke xii. 32. "Fear not little flock." The large piece goes to the devil; a little remnant is Christ's, Rom. ix. 27. Saints in scripture, are called *jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. Precious pearls

and diamonds, which the Latins call *Uniones. Quia nulli duo simul reperiuntur*, (saith Pliny) because nature gives them not by pairs, but one by one: how many pebbles to one pearl! Suitable to this notion, is that complaint of the prophet, Mic. vii. 1, 2. "Wo is me! for I "am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-"gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul de-"sired the first ripe fruits; the good man is perished out of the earth, "and there is none, (i. e. none comparatively) upright among men." The prophet alludes to a poor hungry man, that, after the gathering time is past, comes into an orchard desiring some choice fruit to eat; but, alas; he finds none; there is no cluster; possibly here and there one after the shaking time. True saints are the world's rarities.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for one that follows the example of the multitude.

1. What then will be my lot, when that great shaking time shall come, who have followed the multitude, and gone with the tide of the world? How, even when I have been pressed to strictness and singular diligence in the matters of salvation, and told what a narrow way the way of life is, have I put it off with this? If it be so, then wo to thousands! Ah, foolish heart! Thousands, and ten thousands shall be woful and miserable, indeed, to all eternity! Will it be any mitigation of my misery, that I shall have thousands of miserable companions with me in hell? Or, will it be admitted for a good plea at the judgment-seat, Lord, I did as the generality of my neighbours in the world did; except it were here and there a more precise person, I saw none but lived as I lived. Ah, foolish sinner! is it not better to go to heaven alone, than to hell with company? The worst courses have always the most imitators; and the road to destruction is thronged with passengers.

A reflection for an abuser of mercy.

2. And how little better is my condition, who have often fathered the wickedness of my own heart, upon the encouragement of mercy? Thus hath my heart pleaded against strictness and duty; God is a merciful God, and will not be so severe with the world, to damn so many thousands as are in my condition. Deluded soul! if God had damned the whole race of Adam, he had done them no more wrong: yea, there is more mercy in saving but one man, than there is of severity and rigour in damning all. How many drunkards and adulterers have lived and died with thy plea in their mouths, "God is a merciful God?" But yet his word expressly saith, "Be "not deceived; such shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9. God, indeed, is a God of infinite mercy; but he will never exercise his mercy to the prejudice of his truth.

3. Oh! what rich grace is here, That in a general shipwreck *mer-*

cy should cast forth a line or plank to save me! That when millions perish, I, with a few more should escape that perdition! Was it the Father's good pleasure to bestow the kingdom upon a little flock, and to make me one of that number? What singular obligations hath *mercy* put upon my soul! The fewer are saved, the more cause have they that are to admire their salvation. If but one of a thousand had been damned, yet my salvation would have been an act of infinite grace; but when scarce one of a thousand are saved, what shall I call that grace that cast my lot among them!

A reflection for an elect soul.

THE POEM.

HE that with spir'tual eyes in autumn sees
The heaps of fruit which fall from shaken trees,
Like storms of hail-stones, and can hardly find
One of a thousand that remains behind;
Methinks this meditation should awake
His soul, and make it like those trees to shake.
Of all the clusters, which so lately grew
Upon those trees, how few can they now shew?
Here one, and there another; two or three
Upon the utmost branches of the tree.
The greatest numbers to the pound are borne.
Squeez'd in the trough, and all to pieces torn.
This little handful's left, to shadow forth
To me God's remnant in this peopl'd earth.
If o'er the whole terrestrial globe I look,
The gospel visits but a little nook.
The rest with horrid darkness overspread,
Are fast asleep, yea, in transgression dead.
Whole droves to hell the devil daily drives;
Not one amongst them once resists or strives.
And in this little heaven-enlight'ned spot
How fast an interest hath Satan got?
But few of holiness profession make;
And if from those that do profess, I take
The self-deluding hypocrites, I fear
To think how few'll remain that are sincere.
O tax not mercy that it saves so few;
But rather wonder that the Lord should shew
Mercy to any. Quarrel not with grace;
But for thyself God's gracious terms embrace.
When all were shipwreck'd, thou should'st wonder more
To find thyself so strangely cast ashore,
And there to meet with any that can tell
How narrowly they also 'scap'd from hell.
The smaller number mercy saves, the higher
Engagements lie on thee still to admire.

Had the whole species perish'd in their sin,
And not one individual sav'd been,
Yet every tongue before him must be mute
Confess his righteousness, but not dispute.
Or had the hand of mercy which is free,
Taken another, and pass'd over me;
I still must justify him, and my tongue
Confess my Maker had done me no wrong,
But if my name he please to let me see
Enroll'd among those few that saved be,
What admiration should such mercy move!
What thanks, and praise, and everlasting love!

CHAP. IV.

Upon the Cutting down of dead Trees.

Dead barren trees you for the fire prepare;
In such a case all fruitless persons are.

OBSERVATION.

AFTER many years patience, in the use of all means to recover a fruit-tree, if the husbandman see it be quite dead, and that there can be no more expectation of any fruit from it, he brings his ax, and hews it down by the root; and from the orchard it is carried to the fire, it being then fit for nothing else; he reckons it imprudent to let such a useless tree abide in good ground, where another may be planted in its room, that will better pay for the ground it stands in. I myself once saw a large orchard of fair but fruitless trees all rooted up, rived broad, and ricked up for the fire.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the Lord by useless and barren professors who do but cumber his ground, Matth. iii. 10. "And now also the ax is laid "to the root of the trees; therefore every tree that brings not forth "good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." And Luke xiii. 7. "Then said the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I "came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down; "why cumbereth it the ground?" These three years, alluding to the time of his ministry, he being at that time entering upon the last half-year, as one observes, by harmonizing the evangelists; so long he had waited for the fruit of his ministry among those dead-hearted Jews; now his patience is even at an end: cut them down (saith he) why cumber they the ground? I will plant others, (viz. the Gentiles) in their room. This hewing down of the barren tree doth, in a lively manner, shadow forth God's judicial proceedings against formal

and empty professors under the gospel: and the resemblance clearly holds in these following particulars:

1. The tree that is to be hewn down for the fire, stands in the orchard among other flourishing trees, where it hath enjoyed the benefit of a good soil, a strong fence, and much culture; but being barren, these privileges secure it not from the fire. It is not our standing in the visible church by a powerless profession among real saints with whom we have been associated, and enjoyed the rich and excellent waterings of ordinances, that can secure us from the wrath of God, Matth. iii. 8, 9. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and "think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our fa-"ther." Neither Abraham, nor Abraham's God, will acknowledge such degenerate children; if Abraham's faith be not in your hearts, it will be no advantage that Abraham's blood runs in your veins. It will be a poor plea for Judas, when he shall stand before Christ in judgment, to say, Lord, I was one of thy family, I preached for thee; I did eat and drink in thy presence. Let these scriptures be consulted, Matth. vii. 22. Matth. xxv. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 17, and 25.

2. The husbandman doth not presently cut down the tree because it puts not forth as soon as other trees do; but waits as long as there is any hope, and then cuts it down. Thus doth God wait upon barren dead-hearted persons, from sabbath to sabbath, and from year to year; for the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Thus the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah upon those dry trees, who are now smoking and flaming in hell, 1 Pet. iii. 29. He waits long on sinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience, Luke xiii. 7. "These three years." And Jer. xxv. 3. these twenty-three years.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead tree cannot possibly resist the stroke of the ax; but receives the blow, and falls before it. No more can the stoutest sinner resist the fatal stroke by death, by which the Lord hews him down; Eccl. viii. 8. "There is "no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; nei-"ther hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge "in that war." When the pale horse comes, away you must into the land of darkness. Though thou cry with Adrian, O my poor soul! whither art thou going? Die thou must, thou barren professor; though it were better for thee to do any thing else than to die. What a dreadful shriek will thy conscience give when it sees the ax at thy root, and say to thee, as it is Ezek. vii. 6. "An end is come, the "end is come; it watcheth for thee; behold it is come." Oh! saith Henry Beauford, (that rich and wretched cardinal, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor of England, when he perceived whereunto he must go) wherefore must I die? If the whole realm would save

my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie (quoth he) will not death be hired? Will riches do nothing? No, neither riches nor policy can then avail.

4. The side to which the tree leaned most while it stood, that way it will fall when it is cut down: and as it falls, so it lies, whether to the south or north, Eccl. xi. 3. So it fares with these mystical trees, I mean fruitless professors: Had their hearts and affections inclined and bended heaven-ward whilst they lived, that way, no doubt, they had fallen at their death; but as their hearts inclined to sin, and even bended to the world, so when God gives the fatal stroke, they must fall hell-ward and wrath-ward: And, how dreadful will such a fall be!

5. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, it shall never be among the living trees of the orchard any more; many years it grew among them, but now it shall never have a place there again. And when the barren professor is carried out of the world by death, he shall never be associated with the saints any more: He may then say, farewell all ye saints, among whom I lived, and with whom I so often heard, fasted, and prayed: I shall never see your face more; Matth. viii. 11, 12. "I say unto you, that many shall come from the "east, and west, and north, and south, and shall sit down with "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the "children of the kingdom shall be cast forth into outer darkness; "there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

6. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, the husbandman cuts off its branches, and rives it asunder with his wedges. This also is the lot of barren professors: "The Lord of that servant will "come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him "asunder;" he shall be dissected, or cut abroad, Luke xii. 46.

Now therefore "consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear (or "rend) you in pieces," Psalm l. 22. O direful day! when the same hand that planted, pruned, and watered thee so long, and so tenderly, shall now strike mortal strokes at thee, and that without pity! "For, he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and her "that formed them, will shew them no favour," Isa. xxvii. 11. For the day of mercy is over; and the day of his wrath is fully come.

7. When this tree is cleaved abroad, then its rotten, hollow inside appears, which was the cause of its barrenness; it looked like a fair and sound-bodied tree, but now all may see how rotten it is at the heart; so will God in that day, when he shall dissect the barren professor, discover the rottenness of his heart, and unsoundness of his principles and ends: Then they who never suspected him before, shall see what a hollow and rotten-hearted professor he was.

8. Lastly; The fruitless tree is cast into the fire. This also is the end and sad issue of formality, John xv. 6. "He is cast forth as a branch, "and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the "fire; and they are burned." This is an undoubted truth, that

there is no plant in God's vineyard, but he will have glory from it, by bearing fruit; or glory on it, by burning in the fire. In this fire shall they lie "gnashing their teeth," Luke xiii. 38. and that both in indignation against their saints, whom they shall see in glory; and against Jesus Christ, who would not save them; and against themselves, for losing so foolishly the opportunities of salvation. Do you behold, when you sit by the fire, the froth that boils out of those flaming logs? O think of that foam and rage of those undone creatures, foaming, and gnashing their teeth in that fire which is not quenched! Mark ix. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for a formal hypocrite. How often have I passed by such barren trees, with a more barren heart, as little thinking such a tree to be the *emblem* of myself, as Nebuchadnezzar did, when he saw that tree in a dream, which represented himself, and shadowed forth to him his ensuing misery, Dan. iv. 13. But, O my conscience! my drowsy, sleepy conscience! wert thou but tender, and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as round and terrible an application of such a spectacle to me as the faithful prophet did to him, ver. 22. And thus wouldst thou, O my soul, bemoan thy condition.

Poor wretch! here I grow, for a little time, among the trees of righteousness, the plants of renown, but I am none of them; I was never planted a right seed; some green and flourishing leaves of profession, indeed, I have, which deceive others, but God cannot be deceived; he sees I am fruitless and rotten at the heart. Poor soul! what will thine end be but burning? Behold, the ax lieth by thy root? and wonder it is, that there it should lie so long, and I yet standing! Still mercy pleads for a fruitless creature: Lord, spare it one year longer. Alas! he need strike no great blow to ruin me; his very breath blows to destruction, Job iv. 9. A frown of his face can blast and ruin me, Psalm lxxx. 6. He is daily solicited by his justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. Lord, cure my barrenness! I know thou hadst rather see fruit than fire upon me.

THE POEM.

IF, after pains and patience, you can see
No hopes of fruit, down goes the barren tree.
You will not suffer trees that are unsound,
And barren too, to cumber useful ground.
The fatal ax is laid unto the root:
'Tis fit for fire, when unfit for fruit.
But, though this be a dead and barren tree,
Reader, I would not have it so to thee:
May it to thee this serious thought suggest,
In all the orchard this dead tree's the best;

Think on it sadly, lay it close to heart,
This is the case in which thou wast, or art.
If so thou wast, but now dost live and grow,
And bring forth fruit, what praise and thanks dost owe
To that wise husbandman that made thee so?
O think, when justice lifted up its hand,
How mercy did then interceding stand!
How pity did on thy behalf appear,
To beg reprieval for another year.
Stop, Lord! forbear him: all hope is not past;
He can but be for fire at the last.
Though many sermons, many a gracious call
He hath resisted like a brazen wall,
The next may win him; when thy grace shall raise
Unto itself a monument of praise.
How should this mediation thaw and melt
The heart of him that hath such mercy felt?
But, if thou still remain a barren tree,
Then here, as in a mirror, thou may'st see
Thy wretched state, when justice, at a blow,
Requites God's patience in thine overthrow.
And canst thou bear it? Can thy heart endure
To think of everlasting burnings? Sure,
This must thy lot, thy fearful portion be,
If thou continue still a barren tree.

AN

INTRODUCTION

To the Third Part of

HUSBANDRY.

NOW, from the pleasant orchard let us walk
A turn i' th' fields, and there converse and talk
With cows and horses; they can teach us some
Choice lessons, though irrational and dumb.
My reader's weary; yet I do not fear
To be forsaken by one reader here:
He'll doubtless stay to hear what questions I
Propound to beasts, and how they make reply.
The fatted ox, and pamper'd horse you ride;
Their careless master for his care thus chide.

CHAP. I.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for his Cattle.

More care for horse and oxen many take
Than for their souls, or dearest children's sake.

OBSERVATION.

MANY husbandmen are excessively careful about their cattle, rising themselves early, or causing their servants to rise betimes to provender and dress them. Much time is spent in some countries, in trimming and adorning their horses with curious trappings and plumes of feathers; and if at any time their beasts be sick, what care is taken to recover and heal them: you will be sure they shall want nothing that is necessary for them; yea, many will chuse rather to want themselves, than suffer their horses so to do; and take a great deal of comfort to see them thrive and prosper under their hands.

APPLICATION.

WHAT one said of bloody Herod, who slew so many children at Bethlehem, That it were better to be his swine than his son, may truly enough be applied to some parents and masters, who take less care for the saving the souls of their children and servants, than they do for the bodies of those beasts which daily feed at their stalls and cribs. Many there be who do in reference to their souls, as Jacob did with respect to the preservation of their bodies, when he put all the herds of cattle before, and his wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his brother Esau. It is a weighty saying of a grave * author; 'It is vile ingratitude to rejoice when cattle multiply, 'and repine when children increase; it is heathenish distrustfulness 'to fear that he who provides for your beasts, will not provide for 'your children; and it is no less than unnatural cruelty, to be careful 'of the bodies of beasts, and careless of the souls of children.' Let us but a little compare your care and diligence in both respects, and see, in a few particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your children and servants' souls, as you do the life and health of a beast.

1. Your care for your very horses is expressed early, whilst they are but colts, and not come to do you any service; you are willing to be at pains and cost, to have them broken and brought to their way. This is more than ever many of them did for their children; they can see them wild and profane, naturally taking a stroke or way of wickedness, but yet never were at any pains or cost to break them: these must be fondled and cockered up in the natural way of their own cor-

* Jenk. on Jude, part 2. p. 170.

ruption and wickedness, and not a rod of reproof used to break them off it.

It is observed of the Persians,* that they put out their children to school, as soon as they can speak, and will not see them in seven years after, lest their indulgence should do them hurt.

2. You keep your constant set times, *morning* and *evening* to feed, water, and dress your cattle, and will by no means neglect it once: but how many times have you neglected *morning* and *evening* duties in your families? Yea, how many be there, whose very tables, in respect of any worship God hath there, do very little differ from the very cribs and mangers at which their horses feed? As soon as you are up in a morning, you are with your beasts before you have been with your God. How little do such differ from beasts? And happy were it, if they were no more accountable to God than their beasts are.

The end of your care, cost, and pains about your cattle is, that they may be strong for labour, and the more serviceable to you: thus you comply with the end of their beings. But how rare a thing is it to find these men as careful to fit their posterity to be useful and serviceable to God in their generations, which is the end of their beings? If you can make them rich, and provide good matches for them, you reckon that you have fully discharged the duty of parents: if they will learn to hold the plow, that you are willing to teach them: but, when did you spend an hour to teach them the way of salvation?

Now to convince such careless parents of the heinousness of their sin, let these queries be solemnly considered.

Qu. 1. Whether this be a sufficient discharge of that great duty which God hath laid upon Christian parents, in reference to their families? That God hath charged them with the souls of their families, is undeniable, Deut. vi. 6, 7. Eph. vi. 4. If God hath not clothed you with his authority, to command them in the way of the Lord, he would never have charged them so strictly to yield you obedience as he hath done, Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20. Well, a great trust is reposed in you, look to your duty; for, without dispute, you shall answer for it.

Quest. 2. Whether it be likely, if the time of youth (which is the moulding age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any good afterwards? Husbandmen, let me put a sensible case to you; do you not see in your very horses, that whilst they are young, you can bring them to any way; but if once they have got a false stroke, and by long custom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them off it: you see it in your very orchards; you may bring a tender twig to grow in what form you please; but when it is grown to a sturdy limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other form than what it naturally took. Thus it is with children, Prov. xxii. 6.

* Clark's Mir. p. 506.

" Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he " will not depart from it."

Qu. 3. Whether if you neglect to instruct them in the way of the Lord, Satan, and their own natural corruptions, will not instruct them in the way to hell? Consider this, ye careless parents: if you will not teach your children, the devil will teach them: if you shew them not how to pray, he will shew them how to curse and swear, and take the name of the Lord in vain; if you grudge time and pains about their souls, the devil doth not. Oh! it is a sad consideration, that so many children should be put to school to the devil.

Qu. 4. What comfort are you like to have from them when they are old, if you bring them not up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord when they are young? Many parents have lived to reap in their old age the fruit of their own folly and carelessness, in the loose and vain education of their children. By Lycurgus's law, no parent was to be relieved by his children in age, if he gave them not good education in their youth; and it is a law at this day among the Switzers, That if any child be condemned to die for a capital offence, the parents of that child are to be his executioners: these laws were made to provoke parents to look better to their charge. Believe this as an undoubted truth, That that child which becomes through thy default, an instrument to dishonour God, shall prove, sooner or later, a son or daughter of sorrow to thee.

A reflection for careless parents.

1. God hath found out my sin this day. This hath been my practice ever since I had a family committed to my charge; I have spent more time and pains about the bodies of my beasts, than the souls of my children: beast that I am for so doing! Little have I considered the preciousness of my own, or their immortal souls. How careful have I been to provide fodder to preserve my cattle in the winter, whilst I leave my own and their souls to perish to eternity, and make no provision for them? Surely my children will one day curse the time that ever they were born unto such a cruel father, or of such a merciless mother. Should I bring home the plague in to my family, and live to see all my poor children lie dead by the walls; if I had not the heart of a tyger, such a sight would melt my heart: and yet the death of their souls, by the sin which I propagated to them, as I have done for a beast that perisheth!

A reflection for the disobedient child of a gracious parent.

2. But, unhappy wretch that I am! God cast a better lot for me; I am the off-spring of religious and tender parents, who have always deeply concerned themselves in the everlasting *state of my soul:* many prayers and tears have they poured out to God for me, both in my hearing, as well as in secret; many holy and wholesome counsels have they from time to time dropt upon me; many precious examples have they set in their

own practice before me; many a time when I have sinned against the Lord, have they stood over me, with a rod in their hands, and tears in their eyes, using all means to reclaim me; but like an ungracious wretch, I have slighted all their counsel, grieved their hearts, and imbittered their lives to them by my sinful courses. Ah, my soul! thou art a degenerate plant; better will it be with the off-spring of infidels than with thee, if repentance prevent not: now I live in one family with them, but shortly I shall be separated from them, as far as hell is from heaven; they now tenderly pity my misery, but then they shall approve and applaud the righteous sentence of Christ upon me: so little privilege shall I then have from my relation to them, that they shall be produced as witnesses against me, and all their rejected counsels, reproofs and examples, charged home upon me, as the aggravations of my wickedness; and better it will be, when it shall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a beast, than sprung from the loins of such parents.

THE POEM.

YOUR cattle in fat pastures thrive and grow,
There's nothing wanting that should make them so.
The pamper'd horse commends his master's care,
Who neither pains nor cost doth grudge or spare.
But art not thou mean while the vilest fool,
That pamper'st beasts, and starves thy precious soul?
'Twere well if thou couldst die as well as live
Like beasts, and had no more account to give.
O that these lines your folly might detect!
Who both your own and children's souls neglect
To care for beasts. O man! prepare to hear
The doleful'st language that e'er pierc'd thine ear;
When you your children once in hell shall meet,
And with such language their damn'd parents greet
"O cursed father! wretched mother! why
"Was I your off-spring? Would to God that I
"Had sprung from tygers, who more tender be
"Unto their young than you have been to me.
"How did you spend your thoughs, time, care, and cost
"About my body, whilst my soul was lost?
"Did you not know I had a soul, that must
"Live, when this body was dissolv'd to dust?
"You could not chuse but understand if I,
"Without an interest in Christ did die,
"It needs must come to this. O how could you
"Prove so remorseless, and no pity shew?
"O cruel parents! I may curse the day
"That I was born of such as did betray

"Their child to endless torments. Now must I
"With, and through you, in flames for ever lie."
Let this make every parent tremble, lest
He lose his child, whilst caring for his beast:
Or lest his own poor soul do starve and pine,
Whilst he takes thought for horses, sheep and kine.

CHAP. II.

Upon the hard Labour, and cruel Usage of Beasts.

When under loads your beasts do groan, think then
How great a mercy 'tis that you are men.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH some men be excessively careful and tender over their beasts, as was noted in the former chapter; yet others are cruel and merciless towards them, not regarding how they ride or burden them. How often have I seen them fainting under their loads, wrought off their legs, and turned out with galled backs into the fields or highways to shift for a little grass; many times have I heard and pitied them groaning under unreasonable burdens, and beaten on by merciless drivers, till at last, by such cruel usage, they have been destroyed, and then cast into a ditch for dog's meat.

APPLICATION.

SUCH sights as these should make men thankful for the mercy of their creation, and bless their bountiful Creator, that they were not made such creatures themselves. Some beasts are made *ad esum*, only for food, being no otherwise useful to men, as *swine*, &c. These are only fed for slaughter; we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries and strugglings when the knife is thrust to their very hearts! others are only *ad usum*, for service whilst living, but unprofitable when dead, as *horses*; these we make to drudge and toil for us from day to day, but kill them not; others are both *ad esum*, *et usum*, for food when dead, and service whilst alive, as the *ox*; these we make to plow our fields, draw our carriages, and afterwards prepare them for the slaughter.

But man was made for nobler ends, created lord of the lower world; not to serve, but to be served by other creatures, a mercy able to melt the hardest heart into thankfulness. I remember, Luther* pressing men to be thankful, that they are not brought into

* Luther in 3 Precept.

the lowest condition of creatures, and to bless God that they can see any creature below themselves, give us a famous instance in the following story: Two cardinals (saith he) riding in a great deal of pomp to the council of Constance, by the way they heard a man in the fields, weeping and wailing bitterly; they rode to him, and asked him what he ailed? Perceiving his eye intently fixed upon an ugly toad, he told them that his heart melted with the consideration of this mercy, that God had not made him such a deformed and loathsome creature, though he were formed out of the same clay with it: *Hoc est quod amare fleo*, said he, this is that which makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the cardinals cried out, Well, said the father, the unlearned will rise and take heaven, when we with all our learning shall be thrusti nto hell. That which melted the heart of this poor man, snould melt every heart when we behold the misery to which these poor creatures are subjected. And this will appear a mercy of no slight consideration, if we but draw a comparison betwixt ourselves and these irrational creatures, in these three particulars.

1. Though they and we were made of the same mould and clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward man? The structure of our bodies is much more excellent; God made other good creatures by a word of command, but man by counsel; it was not, Be thou, but, *Let us make man.* We might have been made stones without sense, or beasts without reason, but we were made men. The noble structure and symmetry of our bodies invite our souls not only to thankfulness but admiration. David, speaking of the curious frame of the body, saith, "I am wonder-"fully made," Psal. cxxxix. 14. or, as the vulgar reads it, painted as with a needle, like some rich piece of needle-work curiously embroidered with nerves and veins. Was any part of the common lump of clay thus fashioned? Galen gave Epicurus an hundred years time to imagine a more commodious situation, configuration, or composition of any one part of a human body: and (as one saith) if all the angels in heaven had studied to this day, they could not have cast the body of man into a more curious mould.

2. How little ease or rest have they? They live not many years, and those they do are in bondage and misery, groaning under the effects of sin; but God hath provided better for us, even as to our outward condition in the world; we have the more rest, because they have so little. How many refreshments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are incapable? If we be weary with labour, we can take our rest; but fresh or weary, they must stand to it, or sink under it from day to day.

3. What a narrow capacity hath God given to beasts! What a large capacity to man! Alas, they are only capable of a little sensitive pleasure; as you shall see sometimes, how they will frisk in a green pasture; this is all they are capable of, and this death puts an

end to: but how comprehensive are our souls in their capacities? We are made in the image of God; we can look beyond present things, and are capable of the highest happiness, and that to all eternity: the soul of a beast is but a material form, which, wholly depending upon, must needs die with the body; but our souls are a divine spark or blast; and when the body dies, it dies not with it, but subsists even in its separated state.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How great a sin is ingratitude to God for such a common, but choice mercy of creation and provision for me in this world? There is no creature made worse by kindness, but man. There is a kind of gratitude which I may observe, even in these brute beasts: they do in their way acknowledge their benefactors; "The ox "knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib." How ready are they to serve such as feed and cherish them? But I have been both unthankful and unserviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me good all my days; those poor creatures that sweat and groan under the load that I lay upon them, never sinned against God, nor transgressed the laws of their creation, as I have done; and yet God hath dealt better with me than with them. O that the bounty of God, and his distinguishing mercy between me and the beasts that perish, might move and melt my heart into thankfulness! O that I might consider seriously what the higher and more excellent end of my creation is, and might more endeavour to answer and live up to it! Or else, O my soul, it will be worse with thee than the beasts: it is true, they are under bondage and misery; but it is but for a little time; death will end all their pains, and ease them of all their heavy loads; but I shall groan to all eternity, under a heavier burden than ever they felt; they have no account to give, but so have I. What comfort is it, that I have a larger capacity than a beast hath? That God hath endowed me with reason, which is denied to them? Alas! this will but augment my misery, and enlarge me to take in a greater measure of anguish. *A reflection for an unthankful sinner.*

2. By how many steps, O my soul! mayest thou ascend in the praises of thy God, when thou considerest the mercies that God hath bestowed upon thee; not only in that he made thee not a stone or tree without sense, or an horse or dog without reason; but that thou art not an infidel without light, or an unregenerate person without grace? What! to have sense, and all the delights of it, which stones have not! Reason, with the more high and noble pleasures of it, which beasts have not! the light and knowledge of the great things of the gospel, which the heathens have not! and such an expectation and hope of inconceivable glory and felicity, which the un- *A reflection for an elect soul.*

sanctified have not! O my soul! how rich, how bountiful hath thy God been to thee! These are the overflowings of his love to thee who wast moulded out of the same lump with the *beasts* that groan on earth, yea, with the damned that howl in hell: well may I say that God hath been a good God to me!

THE POEM.

WHEN I behold a tired jade put on
With whip and spur till all his strength be gone;
See streams of sweat run down his bleeding sides,
How little mercy's shewn by him that rides.
If I more thankful to my God would prove
Than such a rider merciless, 'twill move
My soul to praise: For who sees this, and can
But bless the Lord that he was made a man.
And such a sight the rider ought to move
This meditation duly to improve.
What hath this creature done, that he should be
Thus beaten, wounded, and tir'd out by me?
He is my fellow-creature; 'tis mere grace
I had not been in his, he in my case.
Ungrateful, stupid man! God might have made
Me bear the saddle, as I see this jade.
He never sinn'd, but for my sin doth lie
Subjected unto all this misery.
Lord, make my heart relent, that I should be
To thee more useless than my horse to me:
He did his utmost, went as long as ever
His legs could bear him; but for me I never
Thus spent my strength for God, but oft have been
Too prodigal thereof in ways of sin.
Though he's the horse, and I the man, 'twill be
Far better with my horse one day than me:
Unless thy grace prevent and superadd
A new creation unto that I had.
Could every reader fix a serious thought
On such a subject, and hereby be taught
To spiritualize it, and improve it thus;
How sweet would tedious journeys be to us!
But such a task a graceless heart tires out,
More than the tired horse I write about.

CHAP. III.

Upon the seeking of lost Cattle.

When seeking your lost cattle, keep in mind,
That thus Christ Jesus seeks your souls to find.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN cattle are strayed away from your fields, you use all care and diligence to recover them again; tracing their footsteps, crying them in the market-towns, sending your servants abroad, and enquiring yourselves of all that you think can give news of them. What care and pains men will take in such cases, was exemplified in Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 4, 5. who with his servant, passed through mount Ephraim to seek the asses that were strayed from his father, and through the land of Shalisha, and through the land of Shalim, and they were not there, and through the land of the Benjamites, but found them not.

APPLICATION.

THE care and pains you take to recover your lost cattle, carries a sweet and lively representation of the love of Jesus Christ, in the recovery of lost sinners. Jesus Christ came on purpose from heaven upon a like errand, to seek and to save that which was lost, Matth. xviii. 11. There are several particulars in which this glorious design of Christ, in seeking and saving lost man, and the care and pains of husbandmen in recovering their lost cattle, do meet and touch, though there be as many particulars also in which they differ: all which I shall open under the following heads.

1. We sometimes find that cattle will break out of those very fields where they have been bred; and where they want nothing that is needful for them. Just thus lost man departed from his God, brake out of that pleasant enclosure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to soul and body; yet then he brake over the hedge of the command, and went astray, Eccles. vii. 29. "Lo, this only have I "found, that God made man upright, but he sought out to himself "many inventions:" He was not content and satisfied with that blessed state God had put him into, but would be trying new conclusions, to the loss and ruin both of himself and his posterity.

2. Strayers are evermore sufferers for it; all they get by it is to be pined and poinded: and what did man get by departing from his God, but ruin and misery to soul and body? Will you have an abbreviate of his sufferings and losses? The full account none can give you: Why, by straying from his God, he lost the rectitude and holiness of his nature; like a true strayer, he is all dirty and miry, overspread and besmeared both in soul and body with the odious filthiness

of sin; he lost the liberty and freedom of his will to good, a precious jewel of inestimable value. This is a real misery incurred by the fall, though some have so far lost their understandings and humility, as not to own it; he hath lost his God, his soul, his happiness, and his very bowels of compassion towards himself in this miserable state.

3. When your cattle are strayed, yea, though it be but one of the flock or herd, you leave all the rest, and go after that which is lost: So did *Jesus Christ*, who, in the forecited place, Matth. xviii. 12. compares himself to such a shepherd; he left heaven itself, and all the blessed *angels* there, to come into this world to seek lost man. O the precious esteem, and dear love that Christ had to poor man! How did his bowels yearn towards us in our low state! How did he pity us in our misery! As if he had said, poor creatures, they have lost themselves, and are become a prey to the devil in a perishing state; I will seek after them, and save them. The son of man is come to seek and to save.

4. You are glad when you have found your strayers, much more is Christ when he hath found a lost soul. O it is a great satisfaction to him to see the fruit of the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. "Yea, there "is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over "ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance." What demonstrations of joy and gladness did the father of the prodigal give, when he had found his son that was lost? Luke xv. 20.

5. When you have brought home your strayers, you sometimes clog them to prevent their wandering again, and stop up the gaps with thorns; and so doth God oftentimes by such souls as are recovered and brought home to Christ; he hangs a clog of affliction to prevent their departure from God again, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

But then there are five particulars in which Christ's seeking lost souls, and your seeking lost cattle differ.

1. Your cattle sometimes find the way home themselves, and return to you of their own accord; but lost man never did, nor can do so; he was his own destroyer, but can never be his own saviour; it was possible for him not to have lost his God, but having once lost him, can never find him again of himself. Alas! his heart is bent to backsliding, he hath no will to return. Hear how Christ complains, John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me." Man's recovery begins in God, not in himself.

2. Your servants can find, and bring back your lost cattle as well as you; but so cannot Christ's servants: Ministers may discover, but cannot recover them: they daily see, but cannot save them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; intreat and beg them to return they can, and do, but prevail with them they cannot. Melancthon thought, when he began to preach, to persuade all; but old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon.

3. You seek all the cattle that are strayed from you, especially the best; but Jesus Christ only seeks poor lost man. There were other

creatures, and such as by nature were more excellent, that lost their God and themselves: I mean, the apostate angels; but he came not to seek them: herein his singular love to man appears.

4. When you have recovered and brought home your lost cattle, you may lose them the second time, and never recover them again; but so cannot Christ. Man once recovered is for ever secured by him. "All that thou hast given me, I have kept, and not one of "them is lost but the son of perdition;" and he was never savingly found, John xvii. 12.

5. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life for the recovery of them; rather let them go than regain them with such an hazard; but Jesus Christ not only ventured, but actually laid down his life to recover and save lost man: he redeemed them at the price of his own blood; he is that good shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. O the surpassing love of Christ to lost souls!

REFLECTIONS.

1. Lord, I am a lost creature! an undone soul! and herein lies my misery, that I have not only lost my God, but have no heart to return to him: nay, I fly from Christ, who is come on purpose from heaven to seek and to save me: his messengers are abroad, seeking for such as I am, but I avoid them, or at least refuse to obey their call and persuasions to return. Ah, what a miserable state am I in! Every step I go is a step towards hell; my soul, with the prodigal, is ready to perish in a strange country: but I have no mind, with him, to return home. Wretched soul! what will the end of this be? If God have lost thee: the devil hath found thee; he takes up all strayers from God: yea, death and hell will shortly find thee, if Christ do not; and then thy recovery, O my soul! will be impossible! Why sit I here perishing and dying? I am not yet as irrecoverably lost as the damned are. O let me delay no longer, lest I be lost for ever!

A reflection for a lost soul.

2. O my soul! for ever bless and admire the love of Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to seek and save such a lost soul as I was. Lord, how marvellous! how matchless is thy love! I was lost, and am found: I am found, and did not seek; nay, I am found by him from whom I fled. Thy love, O my Saviour! was a preventing love, a wonderful love; thou lovedst me much more than I loved myself; I was cruel to my own soul, but thou wast kind; thou soughtest for me a lost sinner, and not for lost angels; thy hand of grace caught hold of me, and hath let go thousands, and ten thousands, as good as myself by nature: like another David, thou didst rescue my poor lost soul out of the mouth of the destroyer; yea, more than so, thou didst lose thine own life to find mine: and now, dear Jesus, since I am thus marvellously recovered,

A reflection for one that was lost, but is found.

shall I ever straggle again from thee? O let it for ever be a warning to me, how I turn aside into the by-paths of sin any more.

THE POEM.

WHEN cattle from your fields are gone astray,
And you to seek them through the country ride;
Enquiring for them all along the way,
Tracking their footsteps where they turn'd aside;
One servant this way sent, another that,
Searching the fields and country round about;
This meditation now falls in so pat,
As if God sent it to enquire you out:
My beasts are lost, and so am I by sin;
My wretched soul from God thus wand'ring went;
As I seek them, so was I sought by him,
Who from the Father's bosom forth was sent.
Pursu'd by sermons, follow'd close by grace,
And strong convictions, Christ hath sought for me;
Yea, though I shun him, still he gives me chase,
As if resolv'd I should not damned be.
When angels lost themselves, it was not so;
God did not seek, or once for them enquire;
But said, Let these apostate creatures go,
I'll plague them for it with eternal fire.
Lord! what am I, that thou should'st set thine eyes,
And still seek after such a wretch as I?
Whose matchless mercy, and rich grace despise,
As if, in spite thereof, resolv'd to die.
Why should I shun thee? Blessed Saviour, why
Should I avoid thee thus? Thou dost not chase
My soul to slay it; O that ever I
Should fly a Saviour that's so full of grace!
Long hast thou sought me, Lord, I now return,
O let thy bowels of compassion sound;
For my departure I sincerely mourn,
And let this day thy wand'ring sheep be found.

CHAP. IV.

Upon the Feeding of fat Cattle.

Fat beasts you kill, the lean you use to save:
God's dispensations some such meaning have.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a good observation of a Father, and well applied; *Vituli trituranes quotidie ligantur, vituli mactandi quotidie in pascuis libere re-*

linquuntur: Oxen for use are daily yoked and kept short, whilst those that are designed for the shambles, are let loose in green pastures to feed at pleasure. Store beasts fare hard, and are kept lean and low; feeding beasts are excused from the yoke, whilst others are laboured and wrought hard every day; the one hath more than he can eat, the other would eat more if he had it.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the Lord oft-times with his own elect, whom he designs for glory; and with the wicked, who are preparing for the day of wrath: thus are they filled with earthly prosperity and creature-enjoyments, like lusty and wanton beasts turned out at liberty in a fat pasture, whilst poor saints are kept hard and short; Amos iv. 1. "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountains of "Samaria, which oppress the poor, crush the needy." These metaphorical kine are the prosperous oppressors of the world, full fed, and wanton, wicked men. It is true, heaven hath not all the poor, nor hell all the rich; but it is a very common dispensation of providence to bestow most of the things of this world upon them that have no portion in heaven; and to keep them short on earth, for whom that kingdom is provided. Let me draw forth the similitude in a few particulars.

1. The beasts of slaughter have the fattest pastures; so have the ungodly in the world; "Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have "more than heart could wish," Psal. lxxiii. 7. Their hearts are as fat as grease, Psal. cxix. 70. These be they that fleet off the cream of earthly enjoyments, "whose bellies are filled with hidden treasures," Psal. xvii. 14. "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked," Job ix. 24. O what full estates! what an affluence of earthly delights hath God cast in upon some wicked men! There is much wantonness, but no want in their dwellings: some that know not which way to turn themselves in hell, once knew not where to bestow their goods on earth.

2. Feeding beasts grow wanton in their full pastures; there you shall see them tumble and frisk, and kick up their heels. The same effect hath the prosperity of the wicked; it makes them wanton; their life is but a diversion from one pleasure to another, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their "children dance: they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the "sound of the organ: they spend their days in wealth, and in a "moment go down to the grave." The same character doth the prophet Amos give of them, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. "They stretch themselves upon beds of ivory, drink wine in bowls," &c. and no sorrow goes to their hearts. These are they that live in pleasures upon earth, as a fish in the water, Jam. v. 5.

3. These fat pastures do but the sooner hasten the death of these

cattle: the sooner they are fatted, the sooner they are slaughtered; and the prosperity of the wicked serves to the same end: the prosperity of fools shall destroy them; i. e. it shall be the means and instrument of heating and heightening their lusts, and thereby fitting them for destruction; their prosperity is food and fuel to their corruptions. Many wicked men had not been so soon ripe for hell, had they not grown in the sunshine of prosperity.

4. Fatted beasts do not in the least understand the intent and meaning of the husbandman, in allowing them such large and fat pastures, which he denies to his other cattle; and as little as beasts do wicked men understand the scope and end of God's providences, in casting prosperity and wealth upon them; little do they think their tables are a snare, a gin, and a trap for their souls; they only, like beasts, mind what is before them, but do not at all understand the tendency and end of these their sensual delights.

5. Though the husbandman keeps his store-cattle in short commons, yet he intends to preserve them: these shall remain with him, when the others are driven to the slaughter.

Such a design of preservation is carried on in all those outward straits, wants, and hardships which the Lord exposes his people to. I confess, such dispensations, for the present, are very stumbling and puzzling things, even to gracious and wise persons. To see wicked men, not only exempted from their troubles, but even oppressed with prosperity: to see a godly man in wants and straits, and a wicked man have more than his heart can wish, is a case that poses the wisest Christian, till he considers the designs and issues of both those providences, and then he acquiesces in the wisdom of God so ordering it, Psal. lxxiii. 5, 14, 18, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Doth my prosperity fat me up for hell, and prepare me for the day of slaughter? Little cause have I then to glory in it, and lift up my heart upon these things. Indeed, God hath given (I cannot say blessed me with) a fulness of creature-enjoyments; upon these my carnal heart seizeth greedily and securely, not at all suspecting a snare lying in these things for the ruin of my soul. What are all these charming pleasures, but so many rattles to quiet my soul, whilst its damnation steals insensibly upon it? What are all my businesses and employments in the world, but so many diversions from the business of life? There are but two differences betwixt me and the poorest slave the devil hath on earth; such are whipped on to hell by outward miseries, and I am coached to hell in a little more pomp and honour; these will have a less, and I a greater account in the day of reckoning. O that I had never known prosperity! I am now tumbling in a green pasture, and shortly shall be hanging up in the shambles of hell: if this be the best fruit of my

A reflection for a voluptuous worldling.

prosperity, if I were taken captive by cruel cannibals, and fed with the richest fare, but withal understood, that the design of it were to fat me up like a beast for them to feed upon, how little stomach should I have to their dainties! O my soul! it were much better for thee to have a sanctified poverty, which is the portion of many saints, than an ensnaring prosperity, set as a trap to ruin thee for ever.

A reflection for a poor Christian.

2. The wisdom of my God hath allotted me but short commons here; his providence feeds me, but from hand to mouth; but I am, and well may be, contented with my present state; that which sweetens it is, that I am one of the Lord's preserved. How much better is a morsel of bread and a draught of water here, with an expectancy of glory hereafter, than a fat pasture given in, and a fitting for the wrath to come? Well, since the case stands thus, blessed be God for my present lot! Though I have but a little in hand, I have much in hope; my present troubles will serve to sweeten my future joys; and the sorrows of this life will give a lustre to the glory of the next: that which is now hard to suffer, will then be sweet to remember; my songs will then be louder than my groans now are.

THE POEM.

THOSE beasts which for the shambles are design'd,
In fragrant flow'ry meadows you shall find,
Where they abound with rich and plenteous fare,
Whilst others graze in commons thin and bare:
Those live a short and pleasant life, but these
Protract their lives in dry and shorter leas.
Thus live the wicked; thus they do abound
With earthly glory, and with honour crown'd.
Their lofty heads unto the stars aspire,
And radiant beams their shining brows attire.
The fattest portion's serv'd up in their dish;
Yea, they have more than their own hearts can wish.
Dissolv'd in pleasures, crowned with buds of May;
They, for a time, in these fat pastures play,
Frisk, dance and leap, like full-fed beasts; and even
Turn up their wanton heels against the heaven;
Not understanding that this pleasant life,
Serves but to fit them for the butcher's knife.
In fragrant meads they tumbling are to-day,
To-morrow to the slaughter led away.
Their pleasure's gone, and vanish like a bubble,
Which makes their future torments on them double.
Meanwhile God's little flock is poor and lean,
Because the Lord did ne'er intend or mean
This for their portion; and besides doth know
Their souls prove best, where shortest grass doth grow.

Cheer up, poor flock, although your fare be thin,
Yet here is something to take comfort in:
You here securely feed, and need not fear,
Th' infernal butcher can't approach you here.
'Tis somewhat that; but, oh! which far transcends,
Your glorious shepherd's coming, who intends
To lead you hence unto that fragrant hill,
Where, with green pastures, he his flocks will fill;
Or which he from celestial casements pours
The sweetest dews, and constant gracious show'rs;
Along whose banks rivers of pleasures glide,
There his bless'd flocks for ever shall abide,
O envy not the worldlings present joys.
Which to your future mercies are but toys,
Their pasture now is green, your's dry and burn'd,
But then the scene is chang'd, the tables turn'd.

CHAP. V.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for Posterity.

Good husbands labour for posterity;
To after-ages saints must have an eye.

OBSERVATION.

PROVIDENT and careful husbandmen do not only labour to supply their own necessities, while living, but lay up something for their posterity when they are gone: they do not only leave to their children what their progenitors left them, but they desire to leave it improved and bettered. None but bad husbands and spend-thrifts are of the mind with that heathen emperor Tiberius, who having put all into such confusions in the empire, that it might be thought the world would end with him; yet pleased himself with this apprehension, That he should be out of the reach of it; and would often say, When I am dead, let heaven and earth mingle; if the world will but hold my time, let it break when I am gone. But provident men look beyond their own time, and do very much concern themselves in the good or evil of their posterity.

APPLICATION.

WHAT careful husbands do, with respect to the provisions they make for their children, that all prudent Christians are bound to do, with respect to the truths committed to them, and by them to be transmitted to succeeding saints.

In the first ages of the world, even till the law was given, faithful men were instead of books and records; they did, by oral tradition,

convey the truths of God to posterity: but since the sacred truth hath been consigned to writing, no such tradition (except fully consentient with that written word) is to be received as authentic; but the truths therein delivered to the saints, are, by verbal *declarations*, open *confessions*, and constant *sufferings*, to be preserved and delivered from age to age. This was the constant care of the whole cloud of witnesses, both ancient and modern, who have kept the word of God's patience, and would not accept their own lives, liberties, or estates, no, nor the whole world in exchange for that invaluable treasure of truth: they have carefully practised Solomon's counsel, Prov. xxiii. 23. "Buy the truth, but sell it not;" they would not alienate that fair inheritance for all the inheritances on earth. Upon the same reasons that you refuse to part with, or imbezzle your estates, Christians also refuse to part with the truth of God.

1. You will not waste or alienate your inheritance, because it is precious, and of great value in your eyes; but much more precious are God's truths to his people. Luther professed, he would not take the whole *world* for one leaf of his Bible. Though some profane persons may say with Pilate, What is truth? Yet know, that any one truth of the gospel is more worth than all the inheritances upon earth; they are the great things of God's law; and he that sells them for the greatest things in this world, makes a soul-undoing bargain.

2. You will not waste or part with your inheritance, because you know your posterity will be much wronged by it. They that daffle or drink away an estate, drink the tears of their sad widows, and the very blood of their impoverished children. The people of God do also consider, how much the generations to come are concerned in the conservation of the truths of God for them: It cuts them to the heart, but to think that their children should be brought up to worship dumb idols, and fall down before a wooden and breaden God. The very birds and beasts will expose their own bodies to apparent danger of death to preserve their young. Religion doth much more tender the hearts and bowels than nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul disgrace to sell your estates, and become bankrupts; it is a word that bears ill among you: and a Christian accounts it the highest reproach in the world, to be a *traitor* to, or an apostate from the truths of God. When the primitive saints were strictly required to deliver up their Bibles, those that did so, were justly branded, and hissed out of their company, under the odious title of *traditores*, or deliverers.

4. You are so loth to part with your estates, because you know it is hard recovering an estate again when once you have lost it. Christians do also know how difficult it will be for the people of God, in times to come, to recover the light of the gospel again, if once it be extinguished. There is no truth of God recovered out of Antichrist's hands, without great wrestlings and much blood. The church may call every point of reformed doctrine and discipline so

recovered, her Naphtalies; for with great wrestlings she hath wrestled for them; "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to "them," Jude 3.

5. To conclude; rather than you will part with your estates, you will choose to suffer many wants and hardships all your lives; you will fare hard, and go bare, to preserve what you have for your posterity: but the people of God have put themselves upon far greater hardships than these to preserve truth? they have chosen to suffer reproaches, poverty, prisons, death, and the most cruel torments, rather than the loss of God's truth, all the martyrologies will inform you what their sufferings have been, to keep the word of God's patience; they have boldly told their enemies, that they might pluck their hearts out of their bodies, but should never pluck the truth out of their hearts.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for cowardly and faint-hearted professors.

1. Base unbelieving heart! How have I flinched and sunk from truth, when it hath been in danger? I have rather chosen to leave it than my life, liberty, or estate, as a prey to the enemy. I have left truth, and just it is that the God of truth should leave me. Cowardly soul! that durst not make a stand for the truth: yea, rather bold and daring soul! that would rather venture to look a wrathful God, than an angry man in the face. I would not own and preserve the truth, and the God of truth will not own me; 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we deny him, he will deny us."

A reflection for such as suffer for truth.

2. Lord! unto me hast thou committed the precious treasure and trust of truth; and as I received it, so do I desire to deliver it to the generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn may praise the Lord. God forbid I should ever part with such a fair inheritance, and thereby beggar my own, and thousands of souls! Thou hast given me thy truth, and the world hates me; I well know that it is the ground of the quarrel. Would I but throw truth over the walls, how soon would a retreat be sounded to all persecutors? But, Lord, thy truth is invaluably precious. What a vile thing is my blood, compared with the least of all thy truths? Thou hast charged me not to sell it; and, in thy strength, I resolve never to pass a fine, and cut off that golden line whereby thy truths are entailed upon thy people from generation to generation: my friends may go, my liberty may go, my blood may go; but as for thee, precious truth, thou shalt never go.

A reflection for such as are in quiet possession of truth.

3. How dear hath this inheritance of truth cost some Christians? How little hath it cost us? We are entered into their labours; we reap in peace what they sowed in tears, yea, in blood. O the grievous sufferings that they chose to endure! Rather than to deprive us of such an inheritance, those noble

souls, heated with the love of Christ, and care for our souls, made many bold and brave adventures for it; and yet at what a low rate do we value what cost them so dear? Like young heirs that never knew the getting of an estate, we spend it freely. Lord, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy truths, while we are in quiet possession of them. Such intervals of peace and rest are usually of no long continuance with thy people.

THE POEM.

A PUBLIC spirit scorns to plant no root
But such from which himself may gather fruit.
For thus he reasons, If I reap the gains
Of laborious predecessors pains,
How equal is it, that posterity
Should reap the fruits of present industry?
Should every age but serve its turn, and take
No thought for future times, it soon will make
A bankrupt world, and so entail a curse
From age to age, as it grows worse and worse.
Our Christian predecessors careful thus
Have been to leave an heritage to us.
Christ's precious truth conserved in their blood,
For no less price those truths our fathers stood.
They have transmitted, would not alienate
From us, their children, such a fair estate.
We eat what they did set: and shall truth fail
In our days? Shall we cut off th' entail,
Or end the line of honour? Nay, what's worse,
Give future ages cause to hate, and curse
Our memories? Like Naboth, may this age
Part with their blood sooner than heritage.
Let pity move us, let us think upon
Our children's souls, when we are dead and gone:
Shall they, poor souls, in darkness grope, when we
Put out the light, by which they else might see
The way to glory? Yea, what's worse, shall it
Be said in time to come, Christ did commit
A precious treasure, purchased by his blood,
To us, for ours, and for our children's good!
But we, like cowards, false, perfidious men,
For carnal ease, lost it, ourselves, and them.
O let us leave, to after ages, more
Than we receiv'd from all that went before!
That those to come may bless the Lord, and keep
Our names alive, when we in dust shall sleep.

CHAP. VI.

Upon the Husbandman's care to prove and preserve his Deeds.

Deeds for our lands you prove, and keep with care;
O that for heaven you but as careful were!

OBSERVATION.

WE generally find men are not more careful in trying gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their deeds, and preserving them; these are virtually their whole estate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: if they suspect a flaw in their lease or deed, they repair to the ablest council, submit it to his judgment, make the worst of their cause, and query about all the supposable danger with him. If he tell them their case is suspicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? They can neither eat, drink, nor sleep in peace, till they have a good settlement; and willing they are to be at much cost and pains to obtain it.

APPLICATION.

THESE cares and fears with which you are perplexed in such cases, may give you a little glimpse of those troubles of soul, with which the people of God are perplexed about their eternal condition; which, perhaps you have been hitherto unacquainted with, and therefore slighted them, as fancies and whimsies: I say, your own fears and troubles, if ever you were engaged by a cunning and powerful adversary in a law-suit for your estate, may give you a little glimpse of spiritual troubles; and indeed it is no more but a glimpse of them: for, as the loss of an earthly, though fair inheritance, is but a trifle to the loss of God and the soul to eternity; so you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and solicitudes of souls about these things, are much, very much, beyond yours. Let us compare the cases, and see how they answer to each other.

1. You have evidences for your estate, and by them you hold what you have in the world: They also have evidences for their estate in Christ, and glory to come; they hold all *in capite*, by virtue of their intermarriage with Jesus Christ; they come to be instated in that glorious inheritance contained in the covenant of grace. You have their tenure in that scripture, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All is "yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Faith unites them to him, and after they believe, they are sealed by the Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13. They can lay claim to no promise upon any other ground; this is their title to all that they own as theirs.

2. It often falls out, that after the sealing and executing of your deeds, or leases, an adversary finds some dubious clause in them, and thereupon commences a suit at law with you. Thus it frequently

falls out with the people of God, who after their believing and sealing time, have doubts and scruples raised in them about their title. Nothing is more common, than for the devil, and their own unbelief, to start controversies, and raise strong objections against their interest in Christ, and the covenant of promises. These are cunning and potent adversaries, and do maintain long debates with the gracious soul, and reason so cunningly and sophistically with it, that it can by no means extricate and satisfy itself; always alleging, that their title is worth nothing, which they, poor souls, are but too apt to suspect.

3. All the while that a suit of law is depending about your title, you have but little comfort or benefit from your estate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out monies in building or dressing for fear you should lose all at last. Just thus stands the case with doubting Christians; they have little comfort from the most comfortable promises, little benefit from the sweetest duties and ordinances: They put off their own comforts, and say, if we were sure that all this were ours, we would then rejoice in them. But, alas! our title is dubious: Christ is a precious Christ; the promises are comfortable things; but what, if they be none of ours? Ah! how little doth the doubting Christian make of his large and rich inheritance?

4. You dare not trust your own judgments in such cases, but state your case to such as are learned in the laws, and are willing to get the ablest counsel you can to advise you. So are poor doubting Christians; they carry their cases from Christian to Christian, and from minister to minister, with such requests as these: Pray tell me, what do you think of my condition? Deal plainly and faithfully with me; these be my grounds of doubting, and these my grounds of hope. O hide nothing from me! And if they all agree that the case is good, yet they cannot be satisfied till God say so too, and confirm the word of his servants; and therefore they carry the case often before him in such words as those, Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. "Search "me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, "and see if there be any wicked way in me."

5. You have little quiet in your spirits, till the case be resolved; your meat and drink doth you little good; you cannot sleep in the night, because these troubled thoughts are ever returning upon you; what if I should be turned out of all at last? So it is with gracious souls; their eyes are held waking in the night, by reason of the troubles of their hearts, Psalm lxxvii. 4. Such fears as these are frequently returning upon their hearts, what if I should be found a self-deceiver at last? What if I but hug a phantasm instead of Christ? How can this, or that, consist with grace? Their meat and drink doth them little good; their bodies are often macerated by the troubles of their souls.

6. You will not make the best of your condition, when you state your case to a faithful counsellor; neither will they, but oftentimes

(poor pensive souls) they make it much worse than indeed it is: charge themselves with that which God never charged them with; though this be neither their wisdom, nor their duty; but the fears of miscarrying make them suspect fraud in all they do or have.

7. Lastly, When your title is cleared, your hearts are eased; yea, not only eased, but overjoyed; though not in that degree, nor with the same kind of joy with which the hearts of Christians are overflowed, when the Lord speaks peace to their souls. O welcome the sweet morning light, after a tedious night of darkness! now they can eat their bread with comfort, and drink their wine, yea, if it be but water, with a merry heart, Eccles. ix. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

The careless soul's reflection. 1. O how hath my spirit been tossed and hurried, when I have met with troubles and clamours about my estate! But as for spiritual troubles, and those soul-perplexing cases, that Christians speak of, I understand but little of them. I never called my everlasting state in question, nor broke an hour's sleep upon any such account. Ah, my supine and careless soul! little hast thou regarded how matters stand in reference to eternity! I have strongly conceited, but never thoroughly examined the validity of my title to Christ, and his promises; nor am I able to tell, if my own conscience should demand, whereupon my claim is grounded.

O my soul! why art thou so unwilling to examine how matters stand betwixt God and thee? Art thou afraid to look into thy condition, lest by finding thine hypocrisy, thou shouldst lose thy peace, or rather, thy security? To what purpose will it be to shut thine eyes against the light of conviction, unless thou couldst also find out a way to prevent thy condemnation? Thou seest other souls, how attentively they wait under the word, for any thing that may speak to their condition. Doubtless thou hast heard, how frequently and seriously they have stated their condition, and opened their cases to the ministers of Christ. But thou, O my soul! hast no such cases to put, no doubts to be resolved; thou wilt leave all to the decision of the great day, and not trouble thyself about it now. Well, God will decide it; but little to thy comfort.

The doubting soul's reflection. 2. I have heard how some have been perplexed by litigious adversaries; but I believe none have been so tost with fears, and distracted with doubts, as I have been about the state of my soul. Lord, what shall I do? I have often carried my doubts and scruples to thine ordinances, waiting for satisfaction to be spoken there. I have carried them to those I have judged skilful and faithful, begging their resolution and help, but nothing will stick. Still my fears are daily renewed. O my God, do thou decide my case! tell me how the state stands betwixt thee and me; my days consume in trouble, I can neither do nor

enjoy any good, whilst things are thus with me; all my earthly enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable things; yea, which is much worse, all my duties and thine ordinances, prove so too, by reason of the troubles of my heart: I am no ornament to my profession; nay, I am a discouragement and stumbling-block to others. "I "will hearken and hear what God the Lord will speak:" O that it might be peace! If thou do not speak it, none can; and when thou dost, keep thy servant from returning again to folly, lest I make fresh work for an accusing conscience, and give new matter to the adversary of my soul.

3. But thou, my soul, enjoyest a double mercy from thy bountiful God, who hath not only given thee a sound title, but also the clear evidence and knowledge thereof. I am gathering, and daily feeding upon the full-ripe fruits of assurance, which grow upon the top boughs of faith; whilst many of my poor brethren drink their own tears, and have their teeth broken with gravel stones. Lord, thou hast set my soul upon her high-places; but let me not exalt myself, because thou hast exalted me, nor grow wanton, because I walk at liberty; lest for the abuse of such precious liberty, thou clap my old chains upon me, and shut up my soul again in prison.

The assured Christian's reflection.

THE POEM.

MEN can't be quiet till they be assur'd
That their estate is good, and well secur'd.
To able counsel they their deeds submit,
Intreating them with care t' examine it:
Fearing some clause an enemy may wrest,
Or find a flaw; whereby he may divest
Them and their children. O who can but see
How wise men in their generation be!
But do they equal cares and fears express
About their everlasting happiness?
In spiritual things 'twould grieve one's heart to see
What careless fools these careful men can be.
They act like men of common sense bereaven;
Secure their lands, and they'll trust God for heaven.
How many cases have you to submit
To lawyers' judgments? Ministers may sit
From week to week, and yet not see the face
Of one that brings a soul-concerning case.
Yea, which is worse, how seldom do you cry
To God for counsel? Or beg him to try
Your hearts, and strictest inquisition make
Into your estate, discover your mistake?
O stupid souls! clouded with ignorance,
Is Christ and heaven no fair inheritance,

Compar'd with yours? Or is eternity
A shorter term than yours, that you should ply
The one so close, and totally neglect
The other, as not worth your least respect.
Perhaps the devil, whose plot from you's conceal'd,
Persuades your title's good, and firmly seal'd
By God's own Spirit; though you never found,
One act of saving grace to lay a ground
For that persuasion. Soul, he hath thee fast,
Tho' he'll not let thee know it till the last.
Lord, waken sinners, make them understand,
'Twixt thee and them, how rawly matters stand:
Give them no quiet rest until they see
Their souls secur'd better than lands can be.

Occasional MEDITATIONS upon Birds, Beasts, Trees, Flowers, Rivers, and other Objects.

MEDITATIONS ON BIRDS.

MEDITATION I.

Upon the singing of a Nightingale.

WHO that hears such various, ravishing, and exquisite melody, would imagine the bird that makes it, to be of so small and contemptible a body and feather? Her charming voice engaged not only mine attentive ear, but my feet also to make a nearer approach to that shady bush in which that excellent musician sat veiled; and the nearer I came, the sweeter the melody still seemed to be; but when I had descried the bird herself, and found her to be little bigger, and no better feathered than a sparrow, it gave my thoughts the occasion of this following application.

This bird seems to me the lively emblem of the formal hypocrite; (1.) In that she is more in sound than substance, a loud and excellent voice, but a little despicable body; and it recalled to my thoughts the story of Plutarch, who hearing a nightingale, desired to have one killed to feed upon, not questioning but she would please the palate as well as the ear: but when the nightingale was brought him, and he saw what a poor little creature it was, Truly, said he, thou art *vox et præterea nihil*,—a mere voice, and nothing else; so is the hypocrite: did a man hear him sometimes in more public duties and discourses, O, thinks he, what an excellent man is this! what a choice and rare spirit is he of! but follow him home, observe him in his private conversation and retirements, and then you will judge Plutarch's note as applicable to him as the nightingale. (2.) This bird is observed to

charm most sweetly, and set her spirits all on work, when she perceives she hath engaged atttention; so doth the hypocrite, who lives and feeds upon the applause and commendation of his admirers, and cares little for any of those duties which bring in no returns of praise from men: he is little pleased with a silent melody and private pleasure betwixt God and his own soul.

Scire tuum nihil est nisi te scire hoc sciat alter.

Alas! his knowledge is not worth a pin,
If he proclaims not what he hath within.

He is more for the theatre than the closet; and of such Christ saith, "Verily they have their reward." (3.) Naturalists observe the nightingale to be an ambitious bird that cannot endure to be outvied by any: she will rather chuse to die than be excelled; a notable instance whereof we have in the following pleasant poem, translated out of Starda, concerning the nightingale and a lutanist.

Now the declining sun did downward bend
From higher heavens, and from his looks did send
A milder flame, when near to Tyber's flow,
A lutanist allay'd his careful woe
With sounding charms; and in a greeny seat
Of shady oak, took shelter from the heat;
A nightingale o'erheard him, that did use
To sojourn in the neighbour groves, the muse
That fill'd the place, the syren of the wood
(Poor harmless syren!) stealing near, she stood
Close lurking in the leaves attentively
Recording that unwonted melody:
She conn'd it to herself; and ev'ry strain
His fingers play'd her throat return'd again.
The lutanist perceiv'd an answer sent
From th' imitating bird, and was content
To shew her play more fully: then in haste
He tries his lute, and giving her a taste
Of the ensuing quarrel, nimbly beats
On all his strings: as nimbly she repeats;
And wildly raging o'er a thousand keys,
Sounds a shrill warning of her after-lays:
With rolling hand the lutanist then plies
The trembling threads, sometimes in scornful wise
He brushes down the strings, and strikes them all
With one even stroke, then takes them several,
And culls them o'er again; his sparkling joints
With busy discant mincing on the points,
Reach back again with nimble touch, then stays:
The bird replies, and art with art repays.

Sometimes as one unexpert, and in doubt,
How she might weild her voice, she draweth out
Her tone at large, and doth at first prepare
A solemn strain, nor wear'd with winding air,
But with an equal pitch, and constant throat,
Makes clear the passage for her gliding note;
Then cross division diversly she plays,
And loudly chanting out her quickest lays,
Poises the sound, and, with a quivering voice,
Falls back again. He wondering how so choice,
So various harmony could issue out
From such a little throat, doth go about
Some harder lessons, and with wond'rous art,
Changing the strings, doth up the treble dart,
And downward smite the base, with painful stroke
He beats; and as the trumpet doth provoke
Sluggards to fight, ev'n so his wanton skill
With mingled discord joins the hoarse and shrill.
The bird this also tunes: and whilst she cuts
Sharp notes with melting voice, and mingled puts
Measures of middle sound, then suddenly
She thunders deep, and jugs it inwardly
With gentle murmur, clear and dull she sings
By course, as when the martial warning rings.
Believ't the minstrel blusht, with angry mood:
Inflam'd (quoth he) thou chantress of the wood,
Either from thee I'll bear the prize away,
Or vanquish'd break my lute without delay.
Inimitable accents then he strains,
His hands flies on the strings; in one he chains
Far different numbers, chasing here and there,
And all the strings he labours every where?
Both flat and sharp he strikes, and stately grows
To prouder strains, and backward as he goes
Doubly divides, and closing up his lays
Like a full choir, a shiv'ring consort plays:
Then pausing, stood in expectation
Of his co-rival, nor durst answer on.
But she, when practice long her throat had whet,
Enduring not to yield, at once doth set
Her spirits all to work, and all in vain;
For whilst she labours to express again,
With nature's simple voice, such divers keys,
With slender pipes such lofty notes as these.
O'ermatch'd with high designs, ov'ermatch'd with woe;
Just at the last encounter of her foe,

She faints, she dies, falls on his instrument
That conquer'd her! a fitting monument,
How far ev'n little souls are driven on,
Struck with a virtuous emulation.

And even as far are hypocrites driven on by their ambition and pride, which is the spur that provokes them in their religious duties.

MEDITATION II.

Upon the Sight of many small Birds chirping about a dead Hawk.

HEARING a whole choir of birds chirping and twinkling together, it engaged *my* curiosity a little to enquire into the occasion of that convocation, which mine eye quickly informed me of; for I perceived a dead hawk in the bush, about which they made such a noise, seeming to triumph at the death of their enemy; and I could not blame them to sing his knell, who, like a Cannibal, was wont to feed upon their living bodies, tearing them limb from limb, and scaring them with his frightful appearance. This bird, which living was so formidable, being dead, the poorest wren or titmouse fears not to chirp, or hop over. This brings to my thoughts the base and ignoble ends of the greatest tyrants, and greedy ingrossers of the world, of whom, (whilst living) men were more afraid, than birds of a hawk, but dead, became objects of contempt and scorn. The death of such tyrants is both inglorious and unlamented: "When the wicked "perish, there is shouting," Prov. xi. 10. Which was exemplified to the life, at the death of Nero, of whom the poet thus sings;

Cum mors crudelem rapuisset sæva Neronem,
Credibile est multos Romam agitasse jocos.

When cruel Nero dy'd th' historian tells,
How Rome did mourn with bonfires, plays, and bells.

Remarkable for contempt and shame have the ends of many bloody tyrants been. So Pompey the Great, of whom Claudian the poet sings,

Nudus pascit aves, jacetne qui possidet orbem
Exiguæ telluris inops———

Birds eat his flesh. Lo, now he cannot have
Who rul'd the world, a space to make a grave.

The like is storied of Alexander the Great, who lay unburied thirty days; and William the Conqueror, with many other such birds of prey: whilst a beneficial and holy life is usually closed up in an honourable and much lamented death.

For mine own part, I wish I may so order my conversation in the

world, that I may live, when I am dead, in the affections of the best, and leave an honourable testimony in the consciences of the worst; that I may oppress none, do good to all, and say when I die, as good Ambrose did,—I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die.

MEDITATION III.

Upon the Sight of a Blackbird taking Sanctuary in a Bush from a pursuing Hawk.

WHEN I saw how hardly the poor bird was put to it to save herself from her enemy, who hovered just over the bush in which she was fluttering and squeaking, I could not but hasten to relieve her, (pity and succour being a due debt to the distressed;) which, when I had done, the bird would not depart from the bush, though her enemy were gone; this act of kindness was abundantly repaid by this meditation, with which I returned to my walk: my soul, like this bird, was once distressed, pursued, yea, seized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jesus Christ been a sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How readily did I find him to receive my poor soul into his protection? Then did he make good that sweet promise to my experience, Those that come unto me I will in no wise cast out. It called to mind that pretty and pertinent story of the philosopher, who walking in the fields, a bird, pursued by a hawk, flew into his bosom; he took her out, and said, 'Poor bird, 'I will neither wrong thee, nor expose thee to thine enemy, since 'thou camest to me for refuge.' So tender, and more than so, is the Lord Jesus to distressed souls that come unto him. Blessed Jesus! how should I love and praise thee, glorify and admire thee, for that great salvation thou hast wrought for me? If this bird had fallen into the claws of her enemy, she had been torn to pieces indeed, and devoured, but then a few minutes had dispatched her; and ended all her pain and misery: but had my soul fallen into the hands of Satan, there had been no end of its misery.

Would not this scared bird be flushed out of the bush that secured her, though I had chased away her enemy? And wilt thou, O my soul, ever be enticed or scared from Christ thy refuge? O let this for ever engage thee to keep close to Christ, and make me say, with Ezra, "And now, O Lord, since thou hast given me such a de-"liverance as this, should I again break thy commandments!"

MEDITATION IV.

Upon the sight of divers goldfinches intermingling with a flock of sparrows.

METHINKS these birds do fitly resemble the gaudy courtiers, and the plain peasants; how spruce and richly adorned with

shining and various coloured feathers (like scarlet, richly laid with gold and silver lace) are those? How plainly clad, in a home-spun country russet are these? *Fine feathers* (saith our proverb) *make proud birds;* and yet the feathers of the sparrow are as useful and beneficial, both for warmth and flight, though not so gay and ornamental, as the others; and if both were stript out of their feathers, the sparrow would prove the better bird of the two: by which I see, that the greatest worth doth not always lie under the finest clothes: And besides, God can make mean and homely garments as useful and beneficial to poor and despised Christians, as the ruffling and shining garments of wanton gallants are to them: and when God shall strip men out of all external excellencies, these will be found to excel their glittering neighbours in true worth and excellency.

Little would a man think such rich treasures of grace, wisdom, humility, lay under some russet coats.

Sæpe sub attrita latitat sapientia veste.

Under poor garments more true worth may be
Than under silks that whistle, who but he.

Whilst, on the other side, "the heart of the wicked (as Solomon "hath observed) is little worth," how much soever his clothes be worth. Alas! it falls out too frequently among us, as it doth with men in the Indies, who walk over the rich veins of gold and ore, which lie hid under a ragged and barren surface, and know it not. For my own part, I desire not to value any man by what is extrinsical and worldly, but by that true internal excellency of grace, which makes the face to shine in the eyes of God and good men: I would contemn a vile person, though never so glorious in the eye of the world; but honour such as fear the Lord, how sordid and despicable soever to appearance.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the sight of a Robin-red-breast picking up a Worm from a mole-hill, then rising.

OBSERVING the mole working industriously beneath, and the bird watching so intently above, I made a stand to observe the issue; when in a little time the bird descends, and seizes upon a Worm, which I perceived was crawling apace from the enemy below that hunted her, but fell to the share of another which from above waited for her. My thoughts presently suggested the *meditations* from that occasion: methought this poor worm seemed to be the emblem of my poor soul, which is more endangered by its own lusts of pride and covetousness, than this worm was by the mole and bird:

my pride, like the aspiring bird, watches for it above; my covetousness, like the subterranean mole, digging for it beneath. Poor soul! What a sad dilemma art thou brought to? If thou go down into the caverns of this earth, there thou art a prey to thy covetousness that hunts thee; and if thou aspire, or but creep upward, there thy pride waits to ensnare thee. Distressed soul! whither wilt thou go? Ascend thou mayest, not by vain elation, but by heavenly conversation, beside which there is no way for thy preservation; "the way "of life is above to the wise," &c.

Again, I could not but observe the accidental benefit this poor harmless bird obtained by the labour of the mole, who hunting intentionally for herself, unburroughed and ferreted out this worm for the bird, who, possibly, was hungry enough, and could not have been relieved for this time, but by the mole, the fruit of whose labour she now feeds upon. Even thus the Lord oft-times makes good his word to his people: "The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the "just." And again, "The earth shall help the woman." This was fully exemplified in David, to whom Nabal, that churlish muckworm, speaks all in possessives: "Shall I take my bread," &c. "and "give it to one I know not whom?" And yet David reaps the fruits of all the pains and toils of Nabal at last. Let it never encourage me to idleness, that God sometimes gives his people the fruit of others sweat, but if providence reduce me to necessity, and disable me from helping myself, I doubt not then, but it will provide instruments to do it. The bird was an hungry, and could not dig.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the shooting of two Finches fighting in the air.

HOW soon hath death ended the quarrel betwixt these two little combatants! had they agreed better, they might have lived longer; it was their own contention that gave both the opportunity and the provocation of their death; and though living they could not, yet, being dead, they can lie quietly together in my hand.

Foolish birds, was it not enough that birds of prey watched to devour them, but they must peck and scratch one another? Thus have I seen the birds of paradise (saints I mean) tearing and wounding each other, like so many birds of prey, and by their unchristian contests giving the occasion of their common ruin; yea, and that not only when at liberty, as these were, but when engaged also; and yet, as one well observes, if ever Christians will agree, it will either be in a prison, or in heaven; for in prison their quarrelsome lusts lie low, and in heaven they shall be utterly done away.

But O what pity is it, that those who shall agree so perfectly in heaven, should bite and devour each other upon earth? That it should be said of them, as one ingeniously observed, who saw their carcasses lie

together, as if they had lovingly embraced each other, who fell together by a duel: *Quanta amicitia se invicem amplectuntur, qui mutua et implacabili inimicitia perierunt!*

Embracing one another, now they lie,
Who by each other's bloody hands did die.

Or, as he said, who observed how quietly and peaceably the dust and bones, even of enemies, did lie together in the grave; *Non tanta vivi pace conjuncti essetis;* you did not live together so peaceably. If conscience of Christ's command will not, yet the consideration of common safety should powerfully persuade to unity and amity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the singing of a blind finch by night.

A DEAR friend, who was a great observer of the works of God in nature, told me, that being entertained with a sight of many rarities at a friend's house in London; among other things his friends shewed him a *finch*, whose eyes being put out, would frequently sing, even at midnight. This bird, in my opinion, is the lively emblem of such careless and unconcerned persons as the prophet describes, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. who chant to the viol, when a dismal night of trouble and affliction hath overshadowed the church. You would have thought it strange to have heard this bird sing in the night, when all others are in a deep silence except the owl, an unclean bird, and the nightingale, which before we made the emblem of the hypocrite. And as strange it is, that any, except the profane and hypocritical, should so unseasonably express their mirth and jollity; that any of Sion's children should live in pleasure, whilst she herself lies in tears. The people of God, in Psalm cxxxvii. tell us in what postures of sorrow they sat; even like birds, with their heads under their wings, during the night of their captivity. "How shall we sing "the Lord's songs in a strange land?" It is like enough, such as can sing and chant in the night of the church's trouble, have well feathered their nests in the days of her prosperity; however, let them know, that God will turn their unseasonable mirth into a sadder note; and those that now sit sad and silent shall shortly sing for joy of heart, when "the winter is past, the rain over and gone, the flowers appear "again upon the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come."

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the comparing of two Birds Nests.

IT is pretty to observe the structure and commodiousness of the habitations of these little architects, who, though they act not by

reason and counsel, but only by natural instinct, yet reason itself could hardly have contrived a neater building of such simple materials. How neatly hath the *thrush* ceiled or plastered his nest, with admirable art and industry! how warmly hath the *finch* matted his? And both well fenced against the injury of the weather.

How comfortably hath nature provided convenient habitations for these weak and tender young ones, who have warm lodging, and variety of provisions hourly brought them, without their care or pains? This trifling object suggests to my thoughts a more excellent and serious contemplation, even the wonderful and unparalleled abasement of Jesus Christ, who for my sake voluntarily submitted himself to a more destitute and neglected state, than these birds of the air: For Matth. viii. 20. he saith, "The foxes have holes, and "the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not "where to lay his head."

"The craggy rock to foxes holes afford,
"The pleasant woods a resting-place to birds;
"For Chrisht no fixed habitation's found,
"But what was borrow'd, or the naked ground."*

O melting consideration! that the glorious Son of God, John i. 14. "The Lord of glory," James ii. 1. "The brightness of his Fa-"ther's glory," Heb. i. 3. "Who was rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. "and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6. who from *all eternity* was infinitely and ineffably "delighting and rejoic-"ing in the bosom of his Father," Prov. viii. 30. that he, I say, should manifest himself in flesh, 2 Tim. iii 16. yea, "in the likeness of sin-"ful flesh," Rom. viii. 3. that is, in flesh that had the marks and effects of sin upon it, as hunger, thirst, pain, weariness, and mortality, and not only so, but to chuse such a state of outward meanness and poverty, never being possessed of a house in this world; but living as a stranger in other men's houses, and stooping in this respect to a lower condition than the very birds of the air, and all this for enemies. O let it work both admiration and thankfulness in my soul! my body is better accommodated than the body of my Lord. "Dear "Jesus! by how much the viler thou madest thyself for me, by so "much the dearer shalt thou be to me."†

MEDIT. IX.

Upon the early singing of birds.

HOW am I reproved of sluggishness by these watchful birds! which cheerfully entertain the very dawning of the morning

* *Vulpibus in saltu rupes excisa latebras*
Præbet, et aereis avibus dat silva quietem.
Ast hominis Nato nullis succedere tectis
Est licitum——— Heins. in loc.

† *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.

with their cheerful and delightful warblings! They set their little spirits all a-work betimes, whilst my nobler spirits are bound with the bonds of soft and downy slumbers. For shame, my soul! Suffer not that publican sleep to seize so much of thy time, yea, thy best and freshest time! reprove and chide thy sluggish body, as a good bishop once did, when, upon the same occasion, he said, *Surrexerunt passeres, et stertnunt pontifices.*

The early chirping sparrows may reprove
Such lazy bishops as their beds do love.

Of many sluggards it may be said, as Tully said of Verres, the deputy of Sicily, *Quod nunquam solem nec orientem, nec occidentem viderat:* that he never saw the sun rising, being in bed after; nor setting, being in bed before.

It is pity that Christians of all men, should suffer sleep to cut such large thongs out of so narrow a hide as their time on earth is. But alas! it is not so much early rising, as a wise improving those fresh and free hours with God that will enrich the soul; else, as our proverb saith, *A man may be early up, and never the nearer;* yea, far better it is to be found in bed sleeping, than to be up doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing. O my soul! learn to prepossess thyself every morning with the thoughts of God, and suffer not those fresh and sweet operations of thy mind to be prostituted to earthly things; for that is experimentally true, which * one, in this case hath pertinently observed, that if the world get the start of religion in the morning, it will be hard for religion to overtake it all the day after.

MEDIT. X.

Upon the haltering of Birds with a grain of Hair.

OBSERVING, in a snowy season, how the poor hungry birds were haltered and drawn in by a grain of hair cunningly cast over their heads, whilst, poor creatures, they were busily feeding, and suspected no danger; and even whilst their companions were drawn away from them, one after another, all the interruption it gave the rest was only for a minute or two, whilst they stood peeping into that hole through which their companions were drawn, and then fell to their meat again as busily as before; I could not chuse but say, 'Even thus surprizingly doth death steal upon the children of men, 'whilst they are wholly intent upon the cares and pleasures of this 'life, not at all suspecting its so near approach.' These birds saw not the hand that ensnared them, nor do they see the hand of death plucking them one after another into the grave.

* Mr. Case, in Epist. to the Morn. Lect.

" Death steps as swift, and yet no noise it makes;
" Its hand unseen, but yet most surely takes *."

And even as the surviving birds for a little time seemed to stand affrighted, peeping after their companions, and then as busy as ever to their meat again; just so it fares with the careless, inconsiderate world, who see others daily dropping into eternity round about them, and for the present are a little startled, and will look into the grave after their neighbours, and then fall as busily to their earthly employments and pleasures again, as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know, my God, that I must die as well as others; but O let me not die as others do, let me see death before I feel it, and conquer it before it kill me; let it not come as an enemy upon my back, but rather let me meet it as a friend, half way. Die I must, but let me lay up that good treasure before I go, Matt. vi. 19. Carry with me a good conscience when I go, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. and leave behind me a good example when I am gone, and then let death come, and welcome.

Meditations upon Beasts.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the clogging of a straying beast.

HAD this bullock contented himself, and remained quietly within his own bounds, his owner had never put such an heavy clog upon his neck; but I see the prudent husbandman chuses rather to keep him with this clog, than lose him for want of one. What this clog is to him, that is affliction and trouble to me; had my soul kept close with God in liberty and prosperity, he would never thus have clogged me with adversity; yea, and happy were it for me, if I might stray from God no more, who hath thus clogged me with preventive afflictions. If, with David I might say, " Before I was " afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word," Psalm cxix. 67. O my soul! it is better for thee to have thy pride clogged with poverty, thy ambition with reproach, thy carnal expectancies with constant disappointments, than to be at liberty to run from God and duty.

It is true, I am sometimes as weary of these troubles, as this poor beast is of the clog he draws after him, and often wish myself rid of them; but yet, if God should take them off, for ought I know, I might have cause to wish them on again, to prevent a greater mischief. It is storied of Basil, that for many years he was sorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, (that was his clog) he often prayed for

* *Omnibus obscuras injecit illa manus.* Ovid.

the removal of it; at last God removed it, but instead thereof he was sorely exercised with the motions and temptations of lust, which when he perceived, he as earnestly desired his head-ach again, to prevent a greater evil. Lord! if my corruptions may be prevented by my afflictions, I refuse not to be clogged with them; but my soul rather desires thou wouldest hasten the time when I shall be for ever freed from them both.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the love of a Dog to his Master.

HOW many a weary step, through mire and dirt, hath this poor dog followed my horse's heels to day, and all this for a very poor reward? for all he gets by it at night, is but bones and blows, yet will he not leave my company, but is content upon such hard terms, to travel with me from day to day.

O my soul! what conviction and shame may this leave upon thee, who art oftentimes even weary of following thy master, Christ, whose rewards and encouragements of obedience are so incomparably sweet and sure! I cannot beat back this dog from following me, but every inconsiderable trouble is enough to discourage me in the way of my duty. Ready I am to resolve as that scribe did, Matth. viii. 19. "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;" but how doth my heart faulter, when I must encounter with the difficulties of the way? Oh! let me make a whole heart-choice of Christ for my portion and happiness! and then I shall never leave him, nor turn back from following him, though the present difficulties were much more, and the present encouragements much less.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the fighting of two Rams.

TAKING notice how furiously these sheep, which by nature are mild and gentle, did yet, like bulls, push each other, taking their advantage by going back to meet with a greater rage and fury: methought I saw in this a plain emblem of the unchristian contests and animosities which fall out amongst them that call themselves the people of God, who are in scripture also stiled sheep, for their meekness and innocency; and yet, through the remaining corruptions that are in them, thus do they push each other; as one long since complained,

——non secus ac
Cum duo conversis inimica in prælia tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt——

Shall Christians one another wound and push,
Like furious bulls, when they together rush?

The fighting of these sheep doth in two respects notably comport with the sinful practices of contending Christians, 1. That in this fight they engage with their heads one against another: and what are they but those head-notions, or *opposition of sciences* falsely so called, that have made so many broils and uproars in the Christian world? O! what clashings have these heady opinions caused in the churches! First heads, and then hearts have clashed. Christians have not distinguished betwixt *adversarius litis, et personæ;* an adversary to the *opinion*, and to the *person;* but dipt their tongues and pens in vinegar and gall, shamefully aspersing and reproaching one another, because their understandings were not cast into one mould, and their heads all of a bigness. But, 2. That which country-men observe from the fighting of sheep, *That it presages foul and stormy weather*, is much more certainly consequent upon the fighting of Christ's sheep. Do these clash and push? Surely *it is an infallible prognostic of an ensuing storm*, Mal. iv. 6.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the Catching of an Horse in a fat Pasture.

WHEN this horse was kept in poor short leas, where he had much scope, but little grass, how gentle and tractable was he then? He would not only stand quiet to be taken, but come to hand of his own accord, and follow me up and down the field for a crust of bread, or handful of oats; but since I turned him into this fat pasture, he comes no more to me, nor will suffer me to come near him, but throws up his heels wantonly against me, and flies from me as if I were rather his enemy than a benefactor. In this I behold the carriage of my own heart towards God, who the more he hath done for me, the seldomer doth he hear from me; in a low and afflicted state, how tractable is my heart to duty? Then it comes to the foot of God voluntarily. But in an exalted condition, how wildly doth my heart run from God and duty? With this ungrateful requital God faulted his own people, Jer. iii. 31. teachable and tractable in the wilderness, but when fatted in that rich pasture of Canaan, "Then "we are lords, we will come no more to thee." How soon are all God's former benefits forgotten? And now often is that ancient observation * verified, even in his own people?

"No sooner do we gifts on some bestow,
"But presently our gifts grey-headed grow."

* Μετα την δοσιν ταχισα γηρασκει χαρις.
Post munera cito consenescit gratia.

But that is a bad tenant, that will maintain a suit at law against his landlord with his own rent; and a bad heart, that will fight against God with his own mercies. I wish it may be with my heart, as it is reported to be with the waters in the kingdom of Congo, that are never so sweet to the taste, as when the tide is at the highest.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the hunting of a Deer.

THE full-mouthed cry of these dogs, which from the morning have hunted this poor tired deer, which is now no longer able to stand before them, but is compassed round with them, who thirst for, and will presently suck her blood, brings to my thoughts the condition and state of Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, who was thus hunted from place to place by blood-thirsty enemies. Upon this very account, the 22d Psalm, which treats of his death, is inscribed with the title of *Ajieleth Shahar*, which signifies the *hind of the morning*, and fully imports the same notion which this occasion presented me with; for look, as the *hind* or *deer*, which is intended to be run down that day, is roused by the dogs early in the morning, so was Christ, in the very morning of his infancy, by bloody Herod, and that cruel pack confederated with him. Thus was he chased from place to place, till that was fulfilled which was prophetically written of him in ver. 16. of the forecited Psalm: "For dogs have compassed me about, "the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my "hands and my feet."

And canst thou expect, O my soul! to fare better than he did, or escape the rage of bloody men? Surely, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in thee, if his holiness have favoured thee, these dogs will wind it, and give thee chase too: they go upon the scent of holiness still, and would hunt to destruction every one, in whom there is *aliquid Christi*, any thing of Christ, if the gracious providence of the Lord did not sometimes rate them off: for it is no less a pleasure which some wicked ones take in hunting the people of God, than what * Claudian the poet observes men use to take in hunting wild beasts.

"Whilst every huntsman in the night do sleep,
"Their fancies in the woods still hunting keep."

Lord! should I with the hypocrite decline the profession and practice of holiness, to escape the rage of persecuting enemies, at what time they cease, my own conscience would begin to hunt me like a blood-hound; let me rather chuse to be chased by men than God, to flee

* *Venator defessa thero quum membra reponit,*
Mens tamen ad sylvas, et sua lustra redit. Claud.

before pursuing enemies, than be dogged from day to day with a guilty conscience.

MEDITATIONS upon TREES.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the fall of Blossoms, nipt by a frosty morning.

BEHOLDING in an early spring, fruit-trees embossed with beautiful blossoms of various colours, which breathed forth their delicious odours into the circumambient air, and adorned the branches on which they grew, like so many rich jewels, or glittering pendents; and further observing, how these perfumed blossoms dropt off, being bitten with the frost, and discoloured all the ground, as if a shower of snow had fallen; I said within myself, these sweet and early blossoms are not unlike my sweet and early affections to the Lord in the days of my first acquaintance with him. O what fervent love, panting desires, and heavenly delights beautified my soul in those days! The odoriferous scent of the sweetest blossoms, the morning breath of the most fragrant flowers, hath not half that sweetness with which those my first affections were enriched. O! happy time, thrice pleasant spring! My soul hath it still in remembrance, and is humbled within me; for these also were but blossoms which now are nipt and faded, that first flourish is gone; my heart is like the winter's earth, because thy face, Lord, is to me like a winter sun. "Awake, O north wind! "and come, south wind, blow upon my garden, that the spices there- "of may flow out, then let my beloved come into his garden, and "eat his pleasant fruit!"

MEDIT. II.

Upon the knitting, or setting of Fruit.

I HAVE often observed, that when the blossoms of a tree set and knit, though the flourish thereof be gone, and nothing but the bare rudiment of the expected fruit be left; yet then the fruit is much better secured from the danger of frosts and winds, than whilst it remained in the flower or blossom; for now it hath past one of those *critical periods*, in which so many trees miscarry and lose their fruit. And methought this *natural observation* fairly led me to this *theological proposition*, 'That good motions, and holy purposes in the soul, 'are never secured, and past their most dangerous *crisis*, till they 'be turned into fixed resolutions, and answerable executions, which 'is as the knitting and setting of them.'

Upon this proposition my melting thoughts thus dilated: happy had it been for thee, my soul! had all the blessed motions of the

Spirit been thus knit and fixed in thee. Oh, how have mine affections blown and budded under the warm beams of the gospel! But a chill blast from the cares, troubles and delights of the world without, and the vanity and deadness of the heart within, have blasted all; my goodness hath been but as a morning-dew, or early cloud, that vanisheth away. And even of divine ordinances, I may say what is said of human ordinances, "They have perished in the using." A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*, an imperfect thing in itself, and something in order to fruit; a good motion and holy purpose is but *opus imperfectum, et ordinabile*, an imperfect work, in order to a complete work of the Spirit; when that *primus impetus*, those first motions were strong upon my heart, had I then pursued them in the force and vigour of them, how many difficulties might I have overcome? Revive thy work, O Lord, and give not to my soul a miscarrying womb, or dry breasts.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the sight of a fair spreading Oak.

WHAT a lofty flourishing tree is here? It seems rather to be a little wood, than a single tree, every limb thereof having the dimensions and branches of a tree in it; and yet as great as it is, it was once but a little slip, which one might pull up with two fingers; this vast body was contained virtually and potentially in a small acorn. Well then, I will never despise the day of small things, nor despair of arriving to an eminency of grace, though at present it be but as a bruised reed, and the things that are in me be ready to die. As things in nature, so the things of the Spirit, grow up to their fulness and perfection by slow and insensible degrees. The famous and heroical acts of the most renowned believers were such as themselves could not once perform, or it may be think they ever should. Great things, both in nature and grace, come from small and contemptible beginnings.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the sight of many sticks lodged in the branches of a choice Fruit-tree.

HOW is this tree battered with stones, and loaded with sticks, that have been thrown at it, whilst those that grow about it, being barren, or bearing harsher fruit, escape untouched! Surely if its fruit had not been so good, its usage had not been so bad. And yet it is affirmed, that some trees, as the walnut, *&c.* bear the better for being thus bruised and battered.

Even thus it fares in both respects with the best of men; the more holy, the more envied and persecuted; every one that passes by will have a sling at them. Methinks I see how devils and wicked men walk round about the people of God, whom he hath inclosed in his arms of power, like so many boys about an orchard, whose lips water to have a sling at them. But God turns all the stones of reproach into precious stones to his people; they bear the better for being thus battered. And in them is that ancient * observation verified.

"The palms and crowns of virtue thus increase;
"Thus persecution's turned into peace."

Let me be but fruitful to God in holiness, and ever abounding in the work of the Lord, and then whilst devils and men are flinging at me, either by hand or tongue persecutions, I will sing amidst them all with the divine poet:

"What open force, or hidden charm,
"Can blast my fruit, or bring me harm,
"Whilst the inclosure is thine arm." *Herb. Poem, p.* 125.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the gathering of choice Fruit from a scrubbed unpromising Tree.

WOULD any man think to find such rare delicious fruit upon such an unworthy tree to appearance as this is? I should rather have expected the most delicious fruit from the most handsome and flourishing trees; but I see I must neither judge the worth of trees or men by their external form and appearance. This is not the first time I have been deceived in judging by that rule; under fair and promising outsides I have found nothing of worth; and in many deformed despicable bodies I have found precious and richly furnished souls. The sap and juice of this scrubbed tree is concocted into rare and excellent fruits, whilst the juice and sap of some other fair, but barren trees, serves only to keep them from rotting, which is all the use that many souls (which dwell in beautiful bodies) serve for; they have (as one saith) *animam pro sale;* their souls are but salt to their bodies. Or thus,

The only use to which their souls do serve,
Is but like salt their bodies to preserve.

If God have given me a sound soul in a sound body, I have a double mercy to bless him for; but whether my body be vigorous and

* *Crescunt virtutum palmæ, crescuntque coronæ*
Mutantur mundi prælia, pace Dei.

beautiful, or not, yet let my soul be so: for as the esteem of this tree, so the esteem and true honour of every man, rises rather from his fruitfulness and usefulness, than from his shape and form.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon an excellent, but irregular Tree.

SEEING a tree grow somewhat irregular, in a very neat orchard, I told the owner it was pity that tree should stand there; and that if it were mine I would root it up, and thereby reduce the orchard to an exact uniformity. It was replied to this purpose, 'That he 'rather regarded the fruit than the form;' and that this slight inconveniency was abundantly preponderated by a more considerable advantage. This tree, *said he*, which you would root up, hath yielded me more fruit than many of those trees which have nothing else to commend them but their regular situation. I could not but yield to the reason of this answer; and could wish it had been spoken so loud, that all our uniformity-men had heard it, who will not stick to root up many hundred of the best bearers in the Lord's orchard, because they stand not in an exact order with other more conformable, but less beneficial trees, who *perdunt substantiam propter accidentia*, destroy the fruit to preserve the form.

Not much unlike, such foolish men are those,
That strive for shadows, and the substance lose.

MEDITATIONS upon a GARDEN.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the new-modelling of a Garden.

A Gentlewoman who had lately seen a neat and curious garden, returns to her own with a greater dislike of it than ever; resolves to new-model the whole plat, and reduce it to a better form. She is now become so curious and neat, that not a weed or stone is suffered in it, but all must lie in exquisite order; and whatever ornament she had observed in her neighbour's, she is now restless till she sees it in her own.

Happy were it, thought I, if in an holy emulation every one would thus endeavour to rectify the disorders of their own conversation, by the excellent graces they behold in the more heavenly and regular lives of others. Some Christians there are (I wish their number were greater) whose actions lie in such a comely and beautiful order, that few of their neighbours can look upon their examples without

self-conviction and shame; but few are so happy to be provoked into self-reformation by such rare patterns. I see it is much easier to pull up many weeds out of a garden, than one corruption out of the heart; and to procure an hundred flowers to adorn a knot, than one grace to beautify the soul. It is more natural to corrupt man to envy, than to imitate the spiritual excellencies of others.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the pulling up of a Leek.

A WHITE head and a green tail! How well doth this resemble an old wanton lover, whose green youthful lusts are not extinguished, though his white head declares that nature is almost so! Gray hairs should be always matched with grave deportments; and the sins of youth should rather be the griefs than pleasures of old age. It is sad when the sins of the soul, like the diseases of the body, grow stronger, as nature grows weaker: and it recals to my mind that ancient observation of * Menander:

" It is the worst of evils, to behold
" Strong youthful lusts to rage in one that's old."

It is a thousand pities, that those who have one foot in the grave, should live as if the other were in hell! that their lusts should be so lively, when their bodies are three parts dead! Such sinful practices, bring upon them more contempt and shame, than their hoary heads, and reverend faces can procure them honour.

" Gray hairs, and aged wrinkles, did of old
" Procure more reverence than bags of gold†."

But alas! how little respect or reverence can the hoary head obtain amongst wise men, except it be found in the way of righteousness? I think the lowest esteem is too much for an old servant of the devil; and the highest honour little enough for an ancient and faithful servant of Christ.

MEDIT. III.

Upon a heedless tread in a curious Garden.

PASSING through the small divisions of a curious knot, which was richly adorned with rare tulips, and other beautiful flowers;

* Τερωνοθεραςης εσχατη κακη τυκη.
Senex amore captus, ultimum malum. Menand.
† *Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,*
Inque suo pretio ruga senilis erat. Ovid. 5 Fast.

I was very careful to shun these flowers, which indeed had no other worth to commend them, but their exquisite colour; and unadvisedly trod upon and spoiled an excellent choice herb, which, though it grew obscurely, yet had rare physical virtues in it.

When I was made sensible of the involuntary trespass I had committed, I thought I could scarcely make the owner a better compensation, than by telling him, that herein (though against my will) I did but tread in the footsteps of the greatest part of the world who are very careful (as I was) to keep their due distance from splendid, though worthless gallants, mean while trampling upon, and crushing under foot the obscure, but most precious servants of God in the world. As little do they heed these most excellent persons, as I did this precious herb.

Summa ingenia in occulto sæpe latent, saith Plautus.

Rare wits, and herbs, sometimes do sculk and shrink
In such blind holes, as one would little think.

For my own part, I desire to tread upon no man with the foot of contempt and pride, much less upon any good man; and that I may not, it concerns me to look before I step; I mean, to consider before I censure: had I done so by this rare herb, I had never hurt it.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon a withered posy taken up in the way.

FINDING in my walk, a posy of once sweet and fragrant, but now dry and withered flowers, which I suppose to be thrown away by one that had formerly worn it: thus, said I, doth the unfaithful world use its friends, when providence hath blasted and withered them; whilst they are rich and honourable, they will put them into their bosoms, as the owner of this posy did, whilst it was fresh and fragrant, and as easily throw them away as useless and worthless things, when thus they come to be withered. Such usage as this * Petronius long since complained of.

" Are they in honour? Then we smile like friends;
" And with their fortunes all our friendship ends."

But this loose and deceitful friend stinks so odiously in the very nostrils of nature, that a † *heathen poet* severely taxes and condemns it as most unworthy of a man.

* *Cum fortuna manet vultum servatis amici,*
Cum cecidit turpi vertitis ora fuga. Petronius.

† *Turpe sequi casum, et fortunæ cedere, amicum*
Et nisi sit fælix et essnegare suum.

"'Tis base to change with fortune, and deny
"A faithful friend, because in poverty."

And is this indeed the friendship of the world? Doth it thus use them whom once it honoured? Then, Lord! let me never seek its friendship. O let me esteem the smiles and honours of men less, and thy love and favour more! thy love is indeed unchangeable, being pure, free, and built upon nothing that is mutable; thou never servest thy friends as the world doth its darlings.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the sudden withering of a Rose.

BEING with my friend in a garden, we gathered each of us a rose; he handled his tenderly, smelled to it but seldom, and sparingly; I always kept it to my nose, or squeezed it in my hand, whereby in a very short time it lost both colour and sweetness, but his still remained as sweet and fragrant as if it had been growing upon its own root. These roses, said I, are the true emblems of the best and sweetest creature-enjoyments in the world, which being moderately and cautiously used and enjoyed, may for a long time yield sweetness to the possessor of them; but if once the affection seize too greedily upon them, and squeeze them too hard, they quickly wither in our hands, and we lose the comfort of them, and that either through the soul's surfeiting upon them, or the Lord's righteous and just removal of them, because of the excess of our affections to them; earthly comforts, like pictures, shew best at a due distance. It was therefore a good saying of * Homer, Ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδοκῳ, &c.

"I like him not, who at the rate
"Of all his might doth love or hate."

It is a point of excellent wisdom to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all the affections we exercise upon earthly things, and never to slip those reins, unless when they move towards God, in whose love there is no danger of excess.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the sudden withering of beautiful Flowers.

HOW fresh and orient did these flowers lately appear, when being dashed over with the morning dew, they stood in all their pride and glory, breathing out their delicious odours, which perfumed the air

* *Mihi nunquam is placet hospes*
Qui valde preterque modum odit vel amat. Homer.

round about them, but now are withered and shrivelled up, and have neither any desirable beauty or savour in them.

So vain a thing is the admired beauty of creatures, which so captivates the hearts, and exercises a pleasing tyranny over the affections of vain man, yet it is as suddenly blasted as the beauty of a flower *.

" How frail is beauty in how short a time
" It fades, like roses, which have past their prime.
" So wrinkled age the fairest face will plow,
" And cast deep furrows on the smoothest brow.
" Then where's that lovely tempting face? Alas!
" Yourselves would blush to view it in a glass."

If then thou delightest in beauty, O my soul! chuse that which is lasting. There is a beauty which never fades, even the beauty of holiness upon the inner man; this abides fresh and orient for ever, and sparkles gloriously, when thy face (the seat of natural beauty) is become an abhorrent and loathsome spectacle. Holiness enamels and sprinkles over the face of the soul with a beauty, upon which Christ himself is enamoured; even imperfect holiness on earth is a rose that breathes sweetly in the bud; in heaven it will be full-blown, and abide in its prime to all eternity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the tenderness of some choice Flowers.

HOW much care is necessary to preserve the life of some flowers! they must be boxed up in the winter, others must be covered with glasses in their springing up, the finest and richest mould must be sifted about the roots, and assiduously watered, and all this little enough, and sometimes too little to preserve them; whilst other common and worthless flowers grow without any help of ours: Yea, we have no less to do to rid our gardens of them, than we have to make the former grow there.

Thus stands the case with our hearts, in reference to the motions of grace and sin. Holy thoughts of God must be assiduously watered by prayer, earthed up by meditation, and defended by watchfulness; and yet all this is sometimes too little to preserve them alive in our souls. Alas! the heart is a soil that agrees not with them, they

* *Forma bonum fragile est, quantumque accedit ad annos,*
Fit minor, et spatio carpitur ipsa suo.
Nec semper violæ, nec semper lilia florent,
Et riget amissa spina relicta rosa
Tempus erit quo vos speculum vidisse pigebit,
Jam veniunt rugæ quæ tibi corpus arent, &c. Ovid. *de Art.*

are tender things, and a small matter will nip and kill them. To this purpose is the complaint of the divine Poet:

Who would have thought a joy
so coy
To be offended so,
and go
So suddenly away?
Hereafter I had need
take heed.
Joys among other things
have wings,
And watch their opportunities of flight,
Converting in a moment, day to night. Herbert.

But vain thoughts, and unholy suggestions, these spread themselves and root deep in the heart; they naturally agree with the soil: So that it is almost impossible, at any time, to be rid of them. It is hard to forget what is our sin to remember.

MEDIT VIII.

Upon the strange means of preserving the life of Vegetables.

I OBSERVE that plants and herbs are sometimes killed by frosts, and yet without frosts they would neither live nor thrive: They are sometimes drowned with water, and yet without water they cannot subsist: They are refreshed and cheered by the heat of the sun, and yet that sun sometimes kills and scorches them up. Thus lives my soul: Troubles and afflictions seem to kill all its comforts; and yet without these, its comforts could not live. The sun-blasts of prosperity sometimes refresh me, and yet those sun-blasts are the likeliest way to wither me: By what seeming contradictions is the life of my spirit preserved! what a mystery, what a paradox is the life of a Christian?

Welcome my health, this sickness makes me well.
Med'cines adieu.
When with diseases I have list to dwell,
I'll wish for you.
Welcome, my strength, this weakness makes me able.
Powers adieu.
When I am weary grown of standing stable,
I'll wish for you.
Welcome, my wealth, this loss hath gain'd me more.
Riches adieu.

When I again grow greedy to be poor,
I'll wish for you.
Welcome, my credit, this disgrace is glory,
Honours adieu.
When for renown and fame I shall be sorry,
I'll wish for you.
Welcome content, this sorrow is my joy.
Pleasures adieu.
When I desire such griefs as may annoy,
I'll wish for you.
Health, strength, and riches, credit and content,
Are spared best sometimes when they are spent.
Sickness and weakness, loss, disgrace and sorrow,
Lend most sometimes, when most they seem to borrow.

And if by these contrary and improbable ways the Lord preserves our souls in life, no marvel then we find such strange and seemingly contradictory motions of our hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are still restless, in what condition soever he puts us; which restless frame was excellently expressed in that pious epigram of the reverend Gataker, made a little before his death.

I thirst for thirstiness, I weep for tears,
Well pleas'd I am to be displeased thus:
The only thing I fear, is want of fears,
Suspecting I am not suspicious.
I cannot chuse but live, because I die;
And when I am not dead, how glad am I?
Yet when I am thus glad for sense of pain,
And careful am, lest I should careless be;
Then do I grieve for being glad again,
And fear, lest carefulness take care for me.
Amidst these restless thoughts this rest I find,
For those that rest not here, there's rest behind.
Jam tetigi portum, valete.

NAVIGATION

SPIRITUALIZED:

Or, A New Compass for SEAMEN,

Consisting of XXXII Points;

Of { Pleasant OBSERVATIONS,
Profitable APPLICATIONS, and
Serious REFLECTIONS.

All concluded with so many Spiritual POEMS.

What good might seamen get, if once they were
But heavenly minded? If they could but steer
The Christian's course, the soul might then enjoy
Sweet peace, they might like seas o'erflow with joy.
Were God our all, how would our comforts double
Upon us! thus the seas of all our trouble
Would be divinely sweet: men should endeavour
To see God now, and be with him for ever.

To all Masters, Mariners, and Seamen; especially such as belong to the Borough of Clifton, Dartmouth, and Hardness, in the county of Devon.

SIRS,

I FIND it storied of Anacharsis, that when one asked him whether the living or the dead were more? He returned this answer, 'You 'must first tell me (saith he) in which number I must place seamen:' Intimating thereby, that seamen are, as it were, a third sort of persons, to be numbered neither with the living nor the dead; their lives hanging continually in suspense before them. And it was anciently accounted the most desperate employment, and they little better than lost men that used the seas. 'Through all my life (saith Aristotle) 'three things do especially repent me: 1. That ever I revealed a 'secret to a woman. 2. That ever I remained one day without a 'will. 3. That ever I went to any place by sea, whither I might 'have gone by land.' 'Nothing (saith another) is more miserable, 'than to see a virtuous and worthy person upon the sea.' And although custom, and the great improvement of the art of navigation, have made it less formidable now, yet are you no further from death than you are from the waters, which is but a remove of two or three inches. Now you that border so nigh upon the confines of death and eternity every moment, may be well supposed to be men of singular piety and seriousness: For nothing more composes the heart

to such a frame, than the lively apprehensions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than you have. But, alas! for the generality, what sort of men are more ungodly, and stupidly insensible of eternal concernments? living, for the most part, as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement. It was an ancient saying, *Qui nescit orare, discat navigare*, He that knows not how to pray, let him go to sea. But we may say now, (alas! that we may say so in times of greater light) he that would learn to be profane, to drink and swear, and dishonour God, let him go to sea. As for prayer, it is a rare thing among seamen, they count that a needless business: they see the profane and vile delivered as well as others; and therefore what profit is there if they pray unto him? Mal. iii. 4. As I remember, I have read of a profane soldier, who was heard swearing, though he stood in a place of great danger; and when one that stood by him warned him, saying, 'Fellow-soldier, do not swear, the bullets fly;' he answered, 'They that swear come off as well as they that pray.' Soon after a shot hit him, and down he fell. Plato diligently admonished all men to avoid the sea; 'For (saith he) it is the schoolmaster of 'all vice and dishonesty.' Sirs! it is a very sad consideration to me, that you who float upon the great deeps, in whose bottom so many thousand poor miserable creatures lie, whose sins have sunk them down, not only into the bottom of the sea, but of hell also, whither divine vengeance hath pursued them: That you, I say, who daily float, and hover over them, and have the roaring waves and billows that swallowed them up, gaping for you as the next prey, should be no more affected with these things. Oh what a terrible voice doth God utter in the storms! "It breaks the cedars, shakes the wilder-"ness, makes the hinds to calve," Psal. xxix. 5. And can it not shake your hearts? This voice of the Lord is full of majesty, but his voice in the word is more efficacious and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. to convince and rip up the heart. This word is exalted above all his name, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. and if it cannot awaken you, it is no wonder you remain secure and dead, when the Lord utters his voice in the most dreadful storms and tempests. But if neither the voice of God uttered in his dreadful works, or in his glorious gospel, can effectually awaken and rouse, there is an Euroclydon, a fearful storm coming, which will so awaken your souls, as that they shall never sleep any more, Psal. xi. 6. "Upon the wicked he shall rain "snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: This is the "portion of their cup." You that have been at sea in the most violent storms, never felt such a storm as this, and the Lord grant that you never may; no calm shall follow this storm. There are some among you, that, I am persuaded, do truly fear that God in whose hand their life and breath is; men that fear an oath, and are an honour to their profession; who drive a trade for heaven, and are diligent to secure the happiness of their immortal souls, in the insurance-

office above; but for the generality, alas! they mind none of these things. How many of you are coasting to and fro, from one country to another? But never think of that *heavenly* country above, nor how you may get the merchandize thereof, which is better than the gold of Ophir. How oft do you tremble to see the foaming waves dance about you, and wash over you? Yet consider not how terrible it will be to have all the waves and billows of God's wrath to go over your souls, and that for ever. How glad are you after you have been long tossed upon the ocean, to descry land? And how yare and eagerly do you look out for it, who yet never had your hearts warmed with the consideration of that joy which shall be among the *saints*, when they arrive at the *heavenly strand*, and set foot upon the shore of glory.

O Sirs! I beg of you, if you have any regard to those precious, immortal souls of yours, which are also imbarked for *eternity*, whither all winds blow them, and will quickly be at their port of heaven or hell, that you will seriously mind these things, and learn to steer your course to heaven, and improve all winds (I mean opportunities and means) to waft you thither.

Here you venture life and liberty, run through many difficulties and dangers, and all to compass a perishing treasure; yet how often do you return disappointed in your design? Or if not, yet it is but a fading short-lived inheritance, which like the flowing tide, for a while, covers the shore, and then returns, and leaves it naked and dry again: and are not everlasting treasures worth venturing for? Good souls be wise for eternity: I here present you with the fruit of a few spare hours, redeemed for your sakes, from my other studies and employments, which I have put into a new dress and mode. I have endeavoured to clothe spiritual matters in your own dialect and phrases, that they might be the more intelligible to you; and added some pious poems, with which the several chapters are concluded, trying by all means to assault your several affections, and as the apostle speaks, "to catch you with guile." I can say nothing of it; I know it cannot be without its manifold imperfections, since I am conscious of so many in myself, only this I will adventure to say of it, that how defective or empty soever it be in other respects, yet it is stuffed and filled with much true love to, and earnest desires after the salvation and prosperity of your souls. And for the other defects that attend it, I have only two things to offer, in way of excuse; it is the first essay that I ever made in this kind, wherein I find no precedent: and it was hastened for your sakes, too soon out of my hands, that it might be ready to wait upon you, when you undertake your next voyage: so that I could not revise and polish it. Nor indeed was I solicitous about the stile; I consider, I write not for critical and learned persons; my design is not to please your fancies any further, than I might thereby get advantage to profit your souls. I will not once question your welcome reception of it: if God shall bless these

meditations to the conversion of any among you, you will be the gainers, and my heart shall rejoice, even mine. How comfortably should we shake hands with you, when you go abroad, were we persuaded your souls were interested in Christ, and secured from perishing, in the new covenant? What life would it put into our prayers for you, when you are abroad, to consider that Jesus Christ is interceding for you in heaven, whilst we are your remembrancers here on earth? How quiet would our hearts be, when you are abroad in storms, did we know you had a special interest in him whom winds and seas obey? To conclude, what joy would it be to your godly relations, to see you return new creatures? Doubtless more than if you came home laden with the riches of both Indies.

Come Sirs! set the heavenly Jerusalem upon the point of your *new compass;* make all the sail you can for it; and the Lord give you a prosperous gale, and a safe arrival in that land of rest.

So prays

Your most affectionate friend to serve you

in soul-concernments,

JOHN FLAVEL.

To every SEAMAN sailing Heavenward.

Ingenious Seamen,

THE art of Navigation, by which islands especially are enriched, and preserved in safety from foreign invasions; and the wonderful works of God in the great deep, and foreign nations, are most delightfully and fully beheld, &c. is an art of exquisite excellency, ingenuity, rarity, and mirability; but the *art of spiritual navigation* is the art of arts. It is a gallant thing to be able to carry a ship richly laden round the world; but it is much more gallant to carry a soul (that rich loading, a pearl of more worth than all the merchandize of the world) in a body (that is as liable to leaks and bruises as any ship is) through the sea of this world (which is as unstable as water, and hath the same brinish taste and salt gust which the waters of the sea have) safe to heaven (the best haven) so as to avoid splitting upon any soul-sinking rocks, or striking upon any soul-drowning sands. The art of natural navigation is a very great mystery; but the art of spiritual navigation is by much a greater mystery. Human wisdom may teach us to carry a ship to the Indies: but the wisdom only that is from above can teach us to steer our course aright to the *haven of happiness.* This art is purely of *divine revelation.* The truth is, *divinity* (the doctrine of living to God) is nothing else but the *art of soul-navigation,* revealed from heaven. A mere man can carry a ship to any desired

port in all the world, but no mere man can carry a soul to heaven. He must be a saint, he must be a divine (so all saints are) that can be a *pilot* to carry a soul to the *fair-haven in* Emmanuel's *land.* The art of natural navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of Christ, before which time (if there be truth in history) the use of the *loadstone* was never known in the world; and before the virtue of that was revealed unto the mariner, it is unspeakable with what uncertain wanderings seamen *floated* here and there, rather than *sailed* the right and direct way. Sure I am, the art of spiritual navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of Christ; it oweth its clearest and fullest discovery to the coming of Christ. This art of arts is now perfectly revealed in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; but the rules thereof are dispersed up and down therein. The collecting and methodizing of the same cannot but be a work very useful unto souls: though, when all is done, there is an absolute necessity of the teachings of the Spirit, and of the anointing that is from above, to make souls *artists* in sailing heaven-ward. The *ingenious author* of the *Christian's Compass*, or the *Mariner's Companion,* makes three parts of this art (as the schoolmen do of divinity) viz. *speculative*, *practical*, and *affectionate.* The principal things necessary to be known by a spiritual *seamen*, in order to the steering rightly and safely to the *port* of happiness, he reduceth to four heads, answerably to the four general points of the compass; making *God* our *north; Christ* our *east; holiness* our *south;* and *death* our *west* points. Concerning God, we must know (1.) That he is, Heb. xi. 6. and that there is but one God, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. (2.) That this God is that supreme good, in the enjoyment of whom all true happiness lies, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Mat. v. 8.—xviii. 20. (3.) That, life eternal lying in God, and he being incomprehensible and inconceivable in essence, as being a Spirit, our best way to eye him is in his attributes, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. and works, Rom. i. 20. and especially in his Son, 2 Cor. iv. 6. (4.) That as God is a Spirit, so our chiefest, yea, only way of knowing, enjoying, serving, and walking with him, is in the Spirit likewise, Job iv. 24. Concerning Christ, we must know, (1.) That he is the true Sun which ariseth upon the world, by which all are enlightened, John i. 9. Mal. iii. 2. Luke i. 78, 79. (2.) That God alone is in him, reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30. John xiv. 6. (3.) That Jesus Christ is only made ours by the union and indwelling of himself in us through the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. and vi. 17. John xvi. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 13. (4.) That the way of the Spirit's uniting us to Christ, is by an act of power on his part, and by an act of faith on our parts, John iii. 16, 36. and v. 29. Eph. iii. 17. Concerning holiness, we must know, (1.) That whoever is in Christ is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. (2.) Holiness is the soul's highest lustre, Exod. xv. 11. when we come to perfection in holiness, then is our sun at the height in us. (3.) Holiness is Christ's filling the soul;

Christ our Sun is at the highest in our hearts, when they are most holy. (4.) This holiness is that which is directly opposite to sin; sin eclipses holiness, and holiness scatters sin, Heb. vii. 26. Phil. ii. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 11. Concerning death, we must know, (1.) Death is certain; the sun of our life will set in death; when our days come about to this western point, it will be night, Heb. ix. 27. Psal. xlix. 7, 9. (2.) If we die in our sins out of Christ, we are undone for ever, Job viii. 24. Phil. i. 21. (3.) It is our benighting to die, but it is not our annihilating, 1 Cor. xv. Rev. xx. 12. (4.) After death comes judgment; all that die shall arise to be judged, either for life or death, the second time, Heb. ix. 27. Matt. xxv. Heb. vi. 2. These four heads, and the particulars under them, are as necessary to be known in spiritual navigation, as the four points of the compass are in natural navigation. The things which we ought to do in order to our arrival to our happiness, our author makes as many as there be points in the compass. And for an help to memory we may begin every particular with the initial, known letters on the points of the compass. (1.) N. Never stir or steer any course, but by light from God, Psal. cxix. 105. Isa. viii. 10. (2.) N. and by E. Never enter upon any design but such as tends towards Christ, Acts x. 43. (3.) N. N. E. Note nothing enviously, which thrives without God, Psal. lxxiii. 12, 13. (4.) N. E. and by N. Never enterprize not warrantable courses to procure any of the most prized and conceited advantages, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. (5.) N. E. Now entertain the sacred commands of God, if hereafter thou expect the sovereign consolations of God, Psal. cxix. 48. (6.) N. E. and by E. Never esteem Egypt's treasures so much, as for them to forsake the people of God, Heb. xi. 26. (7.) E. N. E. Err not, especially in soul affairs, Jam. i. 16. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 18. (8.) E. and by N. Eschew nothing but sin, 1 Pet. iii. 11. Job i. 7, 8—31, 34. (9.) E. Establish thy heart with grace, Heb. xiii. 9. (10.) E. and by S. Eye sanctity in every action, 1 Pet. i. 15. Zech. xiv. 29. (11.) E. S. E. Ever strive earnestly to live under, and to improve the means of grace. (12.) S. E. and by E. Suffer every evil of punishment of sorrow, rather than leave the ways of Christ and grace. (13.) S. E. Sigh earnestly for more enjoyments of Christ. (14.) S. E. and by S. Seek evermore some evidences of Christ in you the hope of glory. (15.) S. S. E. Still set eternity before you, in regard of enjoying Jesus Christ, John xvii. 24. (16.) S. and by E. Settle it ever in your soul as a principle which you will never depart from, That holiness and true happiness are in Christ, and by Christ. (17.) S. Set thyself always as before the Lord, Psal. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 25. (18.) S. and by W. See weakness hastening thee to death, even when thou art at the highest pitch or point. (19.) S. S. W. See sin which is the sting of death, as taken away by Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. (20.) S. W. and by S. Store up wisely some provisions every day for your dying day. (21.) S. W. Set worldly

things under your feet, before death come to look you in the face. (22.) S. W. and by W. Still weigh and watch with loins girded, and lamps trimmed, Luke xii. 35, 36, 37. (23.) W. S. W. Weigh soul-works, and all in the balance of the sanctuary. (24.) W. and by S. Walk in sweet communion witth Christ here, and so thou mayest die in peace, Luke ii. 29. (25.) W. Whatsoever thy condition be in this world, eye God as the disposer of it, and therein be contented, Phil. iv. 11. (26.) W. and by N. Walk not according to the course of the most, but after the example of the best. (27.) W. N. W. Weigh not what men speak or think of thee, so God approve thee, 2 Chron. x. 18. Rom. ii. 28, 29. (28.) N. W. and by W. Never wink at, but watch against small sins, nor neglect little duties, Eph. v. 15. (29.) N. W. Never wish rashly for death, nor love life too inordinately, Job iii. 4. (30.) N. W. and by N. Now work nimbly ere night come, Job xii. 35, 36. Eccles. ix. 10. (31.) N. N. W. Name nothing when thou pleadest with God for thy soul, but Christ and free-grace, Dan. ix. 17. (32.) N. and by W. Now welcome Christ, if at death thou wouldst be welcomed by Christ. A tender, quick, enlivened, and enlightened conscience, is the only point on which we must erect these practical rules of our Christian compass, Heb. xiii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 12. Our memory, that is the *box*, in which this compass must be kept, in which these rules must be treasured, that we may be as ready and expert in them as the *mariner* is in his sea-compass. So much for the speculative and practical parts of the art of spiritual-navigation. The affectionate part doth principally lie in the secret motions or movings of the soul towards God in the affections, which are raised and warmed, and especially appear active in meditation; meditation being, as it were, the limbec, or still, in which the affections heat and melt, and, as it were, drop sweet spiritual waters. The affectionate author of the *Christian's compass* doth indeed, in the third and last part of his undertaking, hint at several meditations which the spiritual seaman is to be acquainted with, unto which thou hast an excellent supplement in this *New Compass for Seamen*. This collection is prefixed, that at once thou mayest view all the compasses (both speculative, practical, and affectionate) by which thou must steer heaven-ward. What further shall be added by way of preface, is not to commend this new compass, which indeed (2 Cor. iii. 1.) needs no συστατικων επιστολων, *letters of commendation*, or any panegyric to usher it into an honest heart; but to stir up all, especially seamen, to make conscience of using such choice helps for the promoting the sanctification and salvation of their souls, for the making of them as dexterous in the art of spiritual navigation, as any of them are in the art of natural navigation. Consider therefore,

1. What rich merchandise thy soul is. Christ assures us, one soul is more worth than all the world. The Lord Jesus doth, as it were, put the whole world into one scale, and one soul in the other, and the world is found too light, Matt. xvi. 26. Shouldst thou by skill

in natural navigation carry safe all the treasures of the Indies into thine own port, yea, gain the whole world, and for want of skill in spiritual-navigation lose thy own soul, thou wouldest be the greatest loser in the world. So far wilt thou be from profiting by any of thy sea-voyages. There is a plain μειωσις in those words of Christ, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose "his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" More is meant than is spoken *.

2. What a leaking vessel thy body is, † in which this unspeakable, inconceivable rich treasure, thy soul, is embarked! O the many diseases and distempers in the humours and passions that thy body is subject to! It is above 2000 years ago, that there have been reckoned up 300 names of diseases; and there be many under one name, and many nameless, which pose the physicians not only how to cure them, but how to call them. And for the affections and passions of the mind, the distempers of them, are no less deadly to some, than the diseases of the body; but besides these internal causes, there are many external causes of leaks in this vessel, as ‡ poisonous malignities, wrathful hostilities, and casual mishaps; very small matters may be of great moment to the sinking of this vessel. The least gnat in the air may choak one, as it did Adrian, a pope of Rome; a little hair in milk may strangle one, as it did a counsellor in Rome; a little stone of a raisin may stop one's breath, as was the case of the poet Anacreon. Thus you see what a leaking vessel you sail in. Now the more leaky any ship is, the more need there is of skill to steer wisely.

3. Consider what a dangerous sea the world is in which thy soul is to sail in the leaking ship of thy body. As there are not more changes in the sea, than are in the world, the world being only constant in inconstancy, "The fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 31. So there are not more dangers in the sea for ships, than there are in the world for souls. In this world souls meet with rocks and sands, syrens and pirates; worldly temptations, worldly lusts, and worldly company cause many to "drown themselves in perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. The very things of this world endanger your souls. By worldly objects we soon grow worldly. It is hard to touch pitch, and not be defiled. The lusts of this world stain all our glory, and the men of this world pollute all they converse with. A man that keeps company with the men of this world, is like him that walketh in the sun, tanned insensibly. Thus I have hinted to you the dangerousness of the sea wherein you are to sail. Now the more dangerous the sea is, the more requisite it is that the sailor be an artist.

4. Consider, what if through want of skill in the heavenly art of

* Erasmi chiliad. p. 229.

† The smallest pore is a leak wide enough to let in death, and sink thy vessel.

‡ In Ethiopia there is a certain poison whereof the tenth part of one grain will kill a man, and for one grain ten men. *Dan. Sennert. Hypom. Phys. cap. 2. p. 47.*

spiritual navigation, thou shouldst not steer thy course aright! I will instance only in two consequents thereof. 1. Thou wilt never arrive at the haven of happiness. 2. Thou shalt be drowned in the ocean of God's wrath. As true as the word of God is true, as sure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet; as sure as thou yet livest, and breathest in this air; so true and certain it is, thou shalt never enter into heaven, but sink into the deepof the bottomless pit. Am I not herein a messenger of the saddest tidings that ever yet thy ears did hear? Possibly now thou makest a light matter of these things, because thou dost not know what it is to miss of heaven, what it is for ever to lie under the wrath of God; but hereafter thou wilt know fully what it is to have thy soul lost eternally, so lost, as that God's mercies, and all the good there is in Christ, shall never save it; and as God hath set and ordered things, can never save it. Hereafter thou wilt be perfectly sensible of the good that thou mightest have had, and of the evil that shall be upon thee (this is God's peculiar prerogative, to make a creature as sensible of misery as he pleaseth) then thou wilt have other thoughts of these things than thou now hast. Then the thoughts of thy mind shall be busied about thy lost condition, both as to the pain of loss, and the pain of sense *, so that thou shalt not be able to take any ease one moment; then, that thy torments may be increased, they acknowledge the truth of thy apprehensions, yea, the strength of them shall be increased; thou shalt have the true and deep apprehensions of the greatness of that good that thou shalt miss of, and of that evil which thou shalt procure unto thyself; and then thou shalt not be able to chuse, but to apply all thy loss, all thy misery to thyself, which will force thee to roar out, O my loss! O my misery! O my inconceivable, irrecoverable loss and misery! yea, for the increasing of thy torments, thy affections and memory shall be enlarged. O that, to prevent that loss and misery, these things may now be known, and laid to heart! O that a blind understanding, a stupid judgment, a bribed conscience, a hard heart, a bad memory, may no longer make heaven and hell to seem but trifles to thee! thou wilt then easily be persuaded to make it thy main business here, to become an artist in *spiritual navigation*. But to shut up this preface, I shall briefly acquaint *seamen*, why they should, of all others, be men of singular piety and heavenliness, and therefore more than ordinarily study the heavenly art of *spiritual navigation*. O that *seamen* would then consider,

1. How nigh they border upon the confines of death and eternity every moment; there is but a step, but an inch or two beween them and their graves, continually: the next gust may over-set them, the next wave may swallow them up. In one place lie lurking dangerous

* The flames of hell shall shine about the damned, to let them see how they are tormented. *Infid.* on the chief good, Book 2.

rocks, in another perilous sands, and every where stormy winds, ready to destroy them. * Well may the *seamen* cry out, *Ego crastinum non habui;* I have not had a to-morrow in my hands these many years. Should not they then be extraordinary serious and heavenly continually! Certainly (as the reverend *author* of this *new compass* well observes) nothing more composeth the heart to such a frame, than the lively apprehensions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than *seamen* have.

2. Consider *(seamen)* what extraordinary help you have by the book of the creatures; "The whole creation is God's voice; it is "God's excellent † hand-writing, or the sacred scriptures of the "most High," to teach us much of God, and what reasons we have to bewail our rebellion against God, and to make conscience of obeying God only, naturally, and continually. The heavens, the earth, the waters, are the three great leaves of this book of God, and all the creatures are so many lines in those leaves. All that learn not to fear and serve God by the help of this book, will be left inexcusable, Rom. i. 20. How inexcusable then will ignorant and ungodly *seamen* be! *Seamen* should, in this respect, be the best scholars in the Lord's school, seeing they do, more than others, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the great deep, Psal. cvii. 24.

3. Consider how often you are nearer heaven than any people in the world. "They mount up to heaven," Psal. cvii. 26. It has been said of an ungodly minister, that contradicted his preaching in his life and conversation, that it was pity he should ever come out of the pulpit, because he was there as near heaven as ever he would be. Shall it be said of you, upon the same account, that it is a pity you should come down from the high towering waves of the sea? Should not *seamen* that in stormy weather have their feet (as it were) upon the battlements of heaven, look down upon all earthly happiness in this world but as base, waterish, and worthless? The great cities of Campania seem but small cottages to them that stand on the Alps. Should not *seamen*, that so oft mount up to heaven, make it their main business here, once at last to get into heaven? What! *(seamen)* shall you only go to heaven against your wills? When *seamen* mount up to heaven in a storm, the *Psalmist* tells us, That "their souls "are melted because of trouble." O that you were continually as unwilling to go to hell, as you are in a storm to go to heaven!

4. And lastly, Consider what engagements lie upon you to be singularly holy, from your singular deliverances and salvations. They that go down to the sea in ships, are sometimes in the valley of the shadow of death, by reason of the springing of perilous leaks; and yet miraculously delivered, either by some wonderful stopping of the leak, or by God's sending some ship within their sight, when they

* *Terror ubique tremor, timor undeque terror.* Ovid.

† *Mundi creatio est Scriptura Dei.* Clemens. *Universus mundus est Deus explicatus.*

have been far out of sight of any land; or by his bringing their near-perishing ship safe to shore. Sometimes they have been in very great danger of being taken by pirates, yet wonderfully preserved, either by God's calming of the winds in that part of the sea where the pirates have sailed, or by giving the poor pursued ship a strong gale of wind to run away from their pursuers, or by sinking the pirates, &c. Sometimes their ships have been cast away, and yet they themselves wonderfully got safe to shore upon planks, yards, masts, &c. I might be endless in enumerating their deliverances from drowning, from burning, from slavery, &c. Sure *(seamen)* your extrarordinary salvations lay more than ordinary engagements upon you, to praise, love, fear, obey, and trust in your Saviour and Deliverer. I have read that the enthralled Greeks were so affected with their liberty, procured by Flaminius the Roman general, that their shrill acclamations of Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, *a Saviour, a Saviour!* made the very birds fall down from the heavens astonished. O how should *seamen* be affected with their *sea-deliverances!* many that have been delivered from Turkish *slavery*, have vowed to be servants to their *redeemers* all the days of their lives. Ah! Sirs, will not you be more than ordinarily God's servants all the days of your lives, seeing you have been so oft, so wonderfully redeemed from death itself by him? Verily, do what you can, you will die in God's debt. "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against "the Lord in ceasing to pray for you," 1 Sam. xii. 23, 24. That by the perusal of this short and sweet treatise, wherein the judicious and ingenious author hath well mixed *utile dulci*, profit and pleasure, you may learn the good and right way, even to fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your hearts, considering how great things he hath done for you. This is the hearty prayer of

Your cordial friend, earnestly desirous of a prosperous voyage for your precious and immortal souls. T. M.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

WHEN dewy-cheek'd Aurora doth display
Her curtains, to let in the new-born day,
Her heav'nly face looks red, as if it were
Dy'd with a modest blush, 'twixt shame and fear.
Sol makes her blush, suspecting that he will
Scorch some too much, and others leave too chill.
With such a blush, my little new-born book
Goes out of hand, suspecting some may look
Upon it with contempt, while others raise
So mean a piece too high, by flat'ring praise,
Its beauty cannot make its father dote;
'Tis a poor babe clad in a sea-green coat.

'Tis gone from me too young, and now is run
To sea, among the tribe of Zebulun.
Go, little book, thou many friends wilt find
Among that tribe, who will be very kind;
And many of them care of thee will take,
Both for thy own, and for thy father's sake.
Heav'n save it from the dang'rous storms and gusts
That will be rais'd against it by men's lusts.
Guilt makes men angry, anger is a storm,
But sacred truth's thy shelter, fear no harm.
On times, or persons, no reflection's found!
Though with reflections few books more abound.
Go, little book, I have much more to say,
But seamen call for thee, thou must away:
Yet ere you have it, grant me one request,
Pray do not keep it prisoner in your chest.

A

NEW COMPASS

FOR

SEAMEN:

OR,

NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED.

CHAP. I.

The launching of a ship plainly sets forth
Our double state, by first and second birth.

OBSERVATION.

NO sooner is a ship built, launched, rigged, victualled, and manned, but she is presently sent out into the boisterous ocean, where she is never at rest, but continually fluctuating, tossing, and labouring, until she be either overwhelmed, and wrecked in the sea; or through age, knocks, and bruises, grow leaky, and unserviceable; and so is haled up, and ript abroad.

APPLICATION.

No sooner come we into the world as men or as Christians, by a natural or supernatural birth, but thus we are tossed upon a sea of

troubles. Job v. 7. "Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly "upwards." The spark no sooner comes out of the fire, but it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, help, or guidance, but ascends from a principle in itself; so naturally, so easily doth trouble rise out of sin. There is *radically* all the misery, anguish, and trouble in the world in our corrupt natures. As the spark lies close hid in the coals, so doth misery in sin; every sin draws a rod after it. And these sorrows and troubles fall not only on the body, in those breaches, flaws, deformities, pains, aches, diseases, to which it is subject, which are but the groans of dying nature, and its crumbling, by degrees, into dust again! but on all our employments and callings also, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. These are full of pain, trouble, and disappointment, Hag. i. 6. We earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and disquiet ourselves in vain; all our relations full of trouble. The apostle speaking to those that marry, saith, 1 Cor. vii. 28. "Such shall have trouble in the flesh." Upon which words one glosseth thus: Flesh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no; but they that are married, marry with, and match into new troubles: All relations have their burdens, as well as their comforts: It were endless to enumerate the sorrows of this kind, and yet the troubles of the body are but the body of our troubles; the spirit of the curse falls upon the spiritual and noblest part of man. The soul and body, like to Ezekiel's roll, are written full with sorrows, both within and without. So that we make the same report of our lives, when we come to die, that old Jacob made before Pharaoh, Gen. xlvii. 9. "Few and evil hath the days of the years of our lives been." Eccl. ii. 22, 23. "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the "vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? "For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart "taketh no rest in the night: This is also vanity."

See Mr. Whateley's Care-cloth.

Neither doth our new birth free us from troubles, though then they be sanctified, sweetened, and turned into blessings to us. We put not off the human, when we put on the divine nature; nor are we then freed from the sense, though we are delivered from the sting and curse of them. Grace doth not presently pluck out all those arrows that sin hath shot into the sides of nature. 2 Cor. vii. 5. "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but "we were troubled on every side: Without were fightings, and "within were fears." Rev. vii. 14. "These are they that come out "of great tribulations." The first cry of the new-born Christian (says one) gives hell an alarm, and awakens the rage both of devils and men against him. Hence Paul and Barnabas acquainted those new converts, Acts xiv. 22. "That through much tribulation they must "enter into the kingdom of God." And we find the state of the church, in this world, set out (Isa. liv. 11.) by the similitude of a distressed ship at sea: "O thou afflicted [and tossed] with tempests,

and not comforted." [Tossed] as Jonah's ship was; for the same word is there used, Jonah i. 11, 13. as a vessel at sea, stormed and violently driven without rudder, mast, sail, or tackling. Nor are we to expect freedom from those troubles, until harboured in heaven; see 2 Thess. i. 7. O what large catalogues of experiences do the saints carry to heaven with them, for their various exercises, dangers, trials, and marvellous preservations and deliverances out of all! and yet all these troubles without, are nothing to those within them; from temptations, corruptions, desertions, by passion and compassion; Besides their own, there come daily upon them the troubles of others; many rivulets fall into this channel and brim, yea, often overflow the bank. Psalm xxxiv. 19. "Many are the afflictions of the righte-"ous."

REFLECTION.

Hence should the graceless heart thus reflect upon itself, O my soul! into what a sea of troubles art thou launched forth! and what a sad case art thou in! full of trouble, and full of sin; and these do mutually produce each other. And that which is the most dreadful consideration of all, is that I cannot see the end of them. As for the saints, they suffer in the world as well as I; but it is but for a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. and then they suffer no more, 2 Thess. i. 7. "But all "tears shall be wiped away from their eyes," Rev. vii. 17. But my troubles look with a long visage, ah! they are but the beginning of sorrows, but a parboiling before I be roasted in the flames of God's eternal wrath. If I continue as I am, I shall but deceive myself, if I conclude I shall be happy in the other world, because I have met with so much sorrow in this: For I read, Jude, ver. 7. that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, though consumed to ashes, with all their estates and relations, (a sorer temporal judgment than ever yet befel me) do, notwithstanding that continue still in "everlasting "chains, under darkness, in which they are reserved unto the judg-"ment of the great day." These troubles of the saints are sanctified to them, but mine are fruits of the curse. They have spiritual consolations to balance them, which flow into their souls in the same height and degree, as troubles do upon their bodies, 2 Cor. i. 5. But I am a stranger to their comforts, and "intermeddle not with their "joys," Prov. xiv. 10. If their hearts be surcharged with trouble, they have a God to go to; and when they have opened their cause before him, they are eased, return with comfort, and their "counte-"nance is no more sad," 1 Sam. i. 18. When their belly is as bottles full of new wine, they can give it vent by pouring out their souls into their Father's bosom: but I have no interest in, nor acquaintance with this God, nor can I pray unto him in the Spirit. My griefs are shut up like fire in my bosom, which preys upon my spirit. This is my sorrow, and I alone must bear it. O my soul,

look round about thee! what a miserable case art thou in? Rest no longer satisfied in it, but look out for a Christ also. What though I am a vile, unworthy wretch? yet he promiseth to *love freely*, Hos. xiv. 4. and invites such as are heavy laden to him, Mat. xi. 28.

Hence also should the gracious soul reflect sweetly upon itself after this manner: And is the world so full of trouble? O my soul! what cause hast thou to stand admiring at the indulgence and goodness of God to thee? Thou hast hitherto had a smooth passage, comparatively to what others have had. How hath Divine Wisdom ordered my condition, and cast my lot? Have I been chastised with whips? others with scorpions. Have I had no peace without? some have neither had peace without or within, but terrors round about. Or have I felt trouble in my flesh and spirit at once? yet have they not been extreme, either for time or measure. And hath the world been a Sodom, an Egypt to thee? Why then dost thou thus linger in it, and hanker after it? Why do I not long to be gone, and sigh more heartily for deliverance? Why are the thoughts of my Lord's coming no sweeter to me, and the day of my full deliverance no more panted for? And why am I no more careful to maintain peace within, since there is so much trouble without? Is not this it that puts weight into all outward troubles, and makes them sinking, that they fall upon me when my spirit is dark, or wounded?

THE POEM.

My soul, art thou besieg'd
With troubles round about;
If thou be wise, take this advice,
To keep these troubles out.

Wise men will *keep* their conscience as their eyes;
For in their *conscience* their best treasure lies.
See you be *tender* of your inward peace,
That shipwreck'd, *then* your mirth and joy must cease:
If God from *you* your outward comforts rend,
You'll find what *need* you have of such a friend.
If this be *not* by sin destroy'd and lost,
You need not *fear*, your peace will quit your cost.
If you'd know *how* to sweeten any grief,
Tho' ne'er so *great*, or to procure relief
Against th' *afflictions*, which, like deadly darts,
Most fatal *are* to men of carnal hearts;
Reject not *that* which conscience bids you chuse;
And chuse not *you* what conscience saith, refuse.
If sin you *must*, or misery under-lie,
Resolve to *bear*, and chuse the misery.

CHAP. II.

In the vast ocean spiritual eyes descry
God's boundless mercy, and eternity.

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is of vast extent and depth, though supposedly measurable, yet not to be sounded by man. It compasseth about the whole earth, which, in the account of Geographers, is twenty-one thousand and six hundred miles in compass; yet the ocean environs it on every side, Psalm civ. 35. and Job xi. 9. Suitable to which is that of the poet *.

"He spread the seas, which then he did command,
"To swell with winds, and compass round the land."

And for its depth, who can discover it? The sea in Scripture is called the *deep*, Job xxxviii. 30. the *great deep*, Gen. vii. 11. the gathering together of the *waters* into one place, Gen. i. 9. If the vastest mountain were cast into it, it would appear no more than the head of a pin in a tun of water.

APPLICATION.

This, in a lively manner, shadows forth the infinite and incomprehensible mercy of our God, whose mercy is said to be over all his works, Psal. cxlv. 9. In how many sweet notions is the mercy of God represented to us in the Scripture? He is said to be *plenteous*, Psalm ciii. 8. *abundant*, 1 Pet. i. 3. *rich in mercy*, Eph. ii. 4. then, that his mercies are *unsearchable*, Eph. iii. 8. "High as the heavens above "the earth," Psal. x. 4. which are so high and vast, that the whole earth is but a small point to them; yea, they are not only compared to the heavens, but to come home to the *metaphor*, to the depths of the sea, Mic. vii. 19. which can swallow up mountains as well as molehills; and in this sea God hath drowned sins of a dreadful height and aggravation, even *scarlet*, *crimson*, i. e. deep dyed with many intensive aggravations, Isa. i. 18. In this sea was the sin of Manasseh drowned, and of what magnitude that was, may be seen, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3. yea, in this ocean of mercy did the Lord drown and cover the sins of Paul, though a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, 1 Tim. i. 13. "None (saith Augustine) more fierce than Paul among "the persecutors, and therefore none greater among sinners:" To which himself willingly subscribes, 1 Tim. i. 15. *yet pardoned.* How hath mercy rode in triumph, and been glorified upon the vilest of

* *Tum freta diffudit rapidisque tumescere ventis*
Jussit, & ambitæ circumdare littare terræ. Ovid.

men! How hath it stopped the slanderous mouths of men and devils. It hath yearned upon "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, "covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners;" to such have the sceptre of mercy been stretched forth, upon their unfeigned repentance and submission, 1 Cor. vi. 9. What doth the Spirit of God aim at in such a large accumulation of names of mercy? but to convince poor sinners of the abundant fulness and riches of it, if they will but submit to the terms on which it is tendered to them.

In the vastness of the ocean, we have also a lively emblem of eternity. Who can comprehend or measure the ocean, but God? And who can comprehend eternity but he that is said *to inhabit it?* Isa. lvii. 5. Though shallow rivers may be drained and dried up, yet the ocean cannot. And though these transitory days, months, and years will at last expire and determine; yet eternity shall not. O! it is a long word! and amazing matter! what is eternity but a constant permanency of persons and things, in one and the same state and condition for ever; putting them beyond all possibility of change? The heathens were wont to shadow it by a circle, or a snake twisted round. It will be to all of us, either a perpetual day or night, which will not be measured by watches, hours, minutes. And as it cannot be measured, so neither can it ever be diminished. When thousands of years are gone, there is not a minute less to come. Gerhard and Drexelius do both illustrate it by this known similitude: Suppose a bird were to come once in a thousand years to some vast mountain of sand, and carry away in her bill one grain in a thousand years; O what a vast time would it be ere that immortal bird, after that rate, should carry off the mountain! and yet in time this might be done. For there would still be some diminution; but in eternity there can be none. There be three things in time, which are not competent to eternity: In time there is a *succession*, one generation, year, and day passeth, and another comes; but eternity is a fixed [*now*]. In time there is a *diminution* and wasting, the more is past, the less is to come. But it is not so in eternity. In time there is an *alteration* of condition and states: A man may be poor to-day, and rich to-morrow; sickly and diseased this week and well the next; now in contempt, and anon in honour: But no changes pass upon us in eternity. As the tree falls at death and judgment, so it lies for ever. If in heaven, there thou art a pillar, and shalt go forth no more, Rev. iii. 12. If in hell, no redemption thence, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever, Rev. xix. 3.

REFLECTION.

And is the mercy of God like the great deep, an ocean that none can fathom? What unspeakable comfort is this to me? may the pardoned soul say. Did Israel sing a song, when the Lord had overwhelmed their corporeal enemies in the seas? And shall not I break forth into his praises, who hath drowned all my sins in the depth of

mercy? O my soul, bless thou the Lord, and let his high praises ever be in thy mouth. Mayest thou not say, that he hath gone to as high an extent and degree of mercy in pardoning thee as ever he did in any? O my God, who is like unto thee! that pardoneth iniquity, transgresion and sin. What mercy, but the mercy of a God, could cover such abomination as mine?

But O! what terrible reflections will conscience make from hence, unto all despisers of mercy, when the sinner's eyes come to be opened too late for mercy, to do them good! We have heard indeed, that the king of heaven was a merciful king, but we would make no address to him, whilst that sceptre was stretched out. We heard of balm in Gilead, and a physician there, that was able and willing t cure all our wounds, but we would not commit ourselves to him. We read, that the arms of Christ were open to embrace and receive us, but we would not. O unparalleled folly! O soul-destroying madness! Now the womb of mercy is shut up, and shall bring forth no more mercies to me for ever. Now the gates of grace are shut, and no cries can open them.

Mercy acted its part, and is gone off the stage: and now justice enters the scene, and will be glorified for ever upon me. How often did I hear the bowels of compassion sounding in the gospel for me? But my hard and impenitent heart could not relent; and now, if it could, it is too late. I am now past out of the ocean of mercy, into the ocean of eternity, where I am fixed in the midst of endless misery, and shall never hear the voice of mercy more!

O dreadful eternity! O soul-confounding word! An ocean indeed, to which this ocean is but as a drop; for in thee no soul shall see either bank or bottom. If I lie but one night under strong pains of body, how tedious doth that night seem! And how do I tell the clock, and wish for day! In the world I might have had life, and would not. And now, how fain would I have death, but cannot? How quick were my sins in execution? And how long is their punishment in duration? O! how shall I dwell with everlasting burnings? Oh that God would but vouchsafe one treaty more with me! But alas, all tenders and treaties are now at an end with me. On earth peace, Luke ii. 13. but none in hell. O my soul! consider these things; come, let us debate this matter seriously, before we launch out into this ocean.

THE POEM.

WHO from some high rais'd tower views the ground,
His heart doth tremble, and his head goes round;
Even so my soul, whilst it doth view and think
On this eternity, upon whose brink
It borders, stands amazed, and doth cry,
O boundless! bottomless eternity!

The scourge of hell, whose very lash doth rend
The damned souls in twain: What! never end?
The more thereon they ponder, think, and pore,
The more, poor wretches, still they howl and roar.
Ah! though more years in torments we should lie,
Than sands are on the shores, or in the sky
Are twinkling stars; yet this gives some relief!
The hope of ending. Ah! but here's the grief!
A thousand years in torments past and gone,
Ten thousand more afresh are coming on;
And when these thousands all their course have run,
The end's no more than when it first begun.
Come then, my soul, let us discourse together
This weighty point, and tell me plainly whether
You for these short-liv'd joys, that come and go,
Will plunge yourself and me in endless woe.
Resolve the question quickly, do not dream
More time away. Lo, in an hasty stream
We swiftly pass, and shortly we shall be
Ingulphed both in this eternity.

CHAP. III.

Within these smooth fac'd seas strange creatures crawl;
But in man's heart far stranger than them all.

OBSERVATION.

IT was an unadvised saying of Plato, *Mare nil memorabile producit:* the sea produceth nothing memorable. But surely there is much of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God manifested in those inhabitants of the watery region; notwithstanding the sea's azure and smiling face, strange creatures are bred in its womb. "O Lord, "(saith David) how manifold are thy works: In wisdom hast thou "made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and "wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and "great beasts," Psal. civ. 24, 25. And we read, Lam. iv. 3. of sea-monsters, which draw out their breasts to their young. Pliny and Purchas tell incredible stories about them. About the tropic of Capricorn, our seamen meet with flying fishes, that have wings like a rere-mouse, but of a silver colour; they fly in flocks like stares. There are creatures of very strange forms and properties; some resembling a cow, called by the Spaniards, *manates*, by some supposed to be the sea-monster spoken of by Jeremy. In the rivers of Guinea, Purchas saith, there are fishes that have four eyes, bearing two above, and two beneath the water, when they swim: both resembling a toad, and very poisonous. How strange, both in shape and property, is the

sword-fish and thresher, that fight with the whale: Even our own seas produce creatures of strange shapes, but the commonness takes off the wonder.

APPLICATION.

Thus doth the heart of man naturally swarm and abound with strange and monstrous lusts and abominations, Rom. i. 29, 30, 31. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, "covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, "malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, "boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without "understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, im-"placable, unmerciful." O what a swarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more, in the depths of the heart! And it is no wonder, considering that with this nature, we received the spawn of the blackest and vilest abominations. This original lust is productive of them all, James i. 14, 15. Which lust, though it be in every man, *numerically*, different from that of others, yet it is one and the same *specifically*, for sort and kind, in all the children of Adam; even as the reasonable soul, though every man hath his own soul, viz. a soul individually distinct from another man's, yet it is the same for kind in all men. So that whatever abominations are in the hearts and lives of the vilest Sodomites, and the most profligate wretches under heaven; there is the same matter in thy heart out of which they were shaped and formed. In the depths of the heart they are conceived, and thence they crawl out of the eyes, hands, lips, and all the members, Mat. xv. 18, 19. "Those things (saith Christ) which proceed "out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and defile a man. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, "fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" even such monsters as would make a gracious heart tremble to behold. 'What are 'my lusts (saith one*) but so many toads spitting of venom, and 'spawning of poison; croaking in my judgment, creeping in my 'will, and crawling into my affections?' The apostle in 1 Cor. v. 1. tells us of a sin, "not to be named;" so monstrous, that nature itself startles at it: even such monsters are generated in the depths of the hearts. Whence come evils? was a question that much puzzled the philosophers of old. Now here you may see whence they come, and where they are begotten.

REFLECTION.

And are there such strange abominations in the heart of man? Then how is he degenerated from his primitive perfection and glory! His streams were once as clear as crystal, and the fountain of them pure, there was no unclean creature moving in them. What a

* Fuller's Meditations, p. 11.

stately fabric was the soul at first! And what holy inhabitants possessed the several rooms thereof! But now, as God speaks of Idumea, Isa. xxxiv. 11. "The line of confusion is stretched out upon it, and "the stones of emptiness. The cormorant and bittern possess it; "the owl and the raven dwell in it." Yea, as Isa. xiii. 21, 22. "The wild beasts of the desart lie there: it is full of doleful creatures, the satyrs dance in it, and dragons cry in those sometimes "pleasant places." O sad change! how sadly may we look back towards our first state! and take up the words of Job, "O that I "were as in months past, as in the days of my youth; when the "Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteousness, and it "clothed me, when my glory was fresh in me," Job xxix. 2, 4, 5.

Again, think, O my soul, what a miserable condition the unregenerate abide in! Thus swarmed and over-run with hellish lusts, under the dominion and vassalage of divers lusts, Tit. iii. 3. What a tumultuous sea is such a soul: how do these lusts rage within them! how do they contest and scuffle for the throne! and usually take it by turns: for as all diseases are contrary to health, yet some contrary to each other, so are lusts. Hence poor creatures are hurried on to different kinds of servitude, according to the nature of that imperious lust that is in the throne; and, like the lunatic, Mat. xvii. are sometimes cast into the water, and sometimes into the fire. Well might the prophet say, "The wicked is like a troubled sea, that cannot rest," Isa. vii. 20. They have no peace now in the service of sin, and less shall they have hereafter, when they receive the wages of sin. "There "is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." They indeed cry *Peace, peace;* but my God doth not so. The last issue and result of this is eternal death; no sooner is it delivered of its deceitful pleasures, but presently it falls in travail again, and brings forth death, Jam. i. 15.

Once more: and is the heart such a sea, abounding with monstrous abominations? Then stand astonished, O my soul, at that free grace which hath delivered thee from so sad a condition; O fall down and kiss the feet of mercy that moved so freely and seasonably to thy rescue? Let my heart be enlarged abundantly here. Lord, what am I, that I should be taken, and others left? Reflect, O my soul, upon the conceptions and bursts of lusts in the days of vanity, which thou now blushest to own. O what black imaginations, hellish desires, vile affections are lodged there! Who made me to differ? or, how came I to be thus wonderfully separated? Surely, it is by thy free-grace, and nothing else, that I am what I am; and by that grace I have escaped (to mine own astonishment) the corruption that is in the world through lust. O that ever the holy God should set his eyes on such an one; or cast a look of love towards me, in whom were legions of unclean lusts and abominations.

THE POEM.

MY soul's the sea, wherein, from day to day,
Sins like Leviathans do sport and play.
Great master-lusts, with all the lesser fry,
Therein increase, and strangely multiply.
Yet strange it is not, sin so fast should breed,
Since with this nature I receiv'd the seed
And spawn of ev'ry species, which was shed
Into its caverns first, then nourished
By its own native warmth; which like the sun
Hath quick'ned them, and now abroad they come:
And like the frogs of Egypt creep and crawl
Into the closest rooms within my soul.
My fancy swarms, for there they frisk and play,
In dreams by night, and foolish toys by day.
My judgment's clouded by them, and my will
Perverted, every corner they do fill.
As locusts seize on all that's fresh and green,
Unclothe the beauteous spring, and make it seem
Like drooping autumn; so my soul, that first
As Eden seem'd, now's like a ground that's curst.
Lord purge my streams, and kill those lusts that lie
Within them; if they do not, I must die.

Seas purge themselves, and cast their filth ashore,
But graceless souls retain, and suck in more.

OBSERVATION.

SEAS are in a continual motion and agitation, they have their flux and reflux, by which they are kept from putrefaction: like a fountain it cleanses itself, Isa. lvii. 20. "It cannot rest, but casts up "mire and dirt;" whereas lakes and ponds, whose waters are standing, and dead, corrupt and stink. And it is observed by seamen, that in the southern parts of the world, where the sea is more calm and settled, it is more corrupt and unfit for use; so is the sea of Sodom, called the *dead sea*.

APPLICATION.

Thus do regenerate souls purify themselves, and work out corruption that defiles them, they cannot suffer it to settle there, 1 John iii. 3. "He purifieth himself, even as he is pure." "Keepeth himself "that the wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v. 18. scil. *tanctè*

qualitativo, with a qualitative touch, as the loadstone toucheth iron, leaving an impression of its nature behind it. They are doves delighting in cleanness, Isa. xxxiii. 15. "He despiseth the gain of oppres- "sion, he shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, stoppeth his ears "from hearing blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." See how all senses and members are guarded against sin: but it is quite contrary with the wicked; there is no principle of holiness in them to oppose or expel corruption. It lies in their hearts as mud in a lake or well, which settles and corrupts more and more. Hence Ezek. xlvii. 11. their hearts are compared to miry or marshy places, which cannot be healed, but are given to salt: the meaning is, that the purest streams of the gospel, which cleanse others, make them worse than before, as abundance of rain will a miry place. The reason is, because it meets with an obstacle in their souls, so that it cannot run through them and be glorified, as it doth in gracious souls. All the means and endeavours used to cleanse them are in vain; all the grace of God they receive in vain, "they hold fast deceit, they refuse to "let it go," Jer. viii. 5. Sin is not in them as floating weeds upon the sea, which it strives to expel and purge out, but as spots in the leopard's skin, Jer. xiii. 21. or letters fashioned and engraven in the very substance of marble or brass with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1. or as ivy in an old wall, that hath gotten root in its very entrails. "Wickedness is sweet to their mouths, they roll "it under their tongues," Job xx. 12. No threats nor promises can divorce them from it.

REFLECTION.

Lord! this is the very frame of my heart, may the graceless soul say. My corruptions quietly settle in me, my heart labours not against them: I am a stranger to that conflict which is daily maintained in all the faculties of the regenerate soul. Glorified souls have no such conflict, because grace in them stands alone, and is perfectly triumphant over all opposites; and graceless souls can have no such conflict, because in them corruption stands alone, and hath no other principle to make opposition to it. And this is my case, O Lord! I am full of vain hopes indeed, but had I a living and well-grounded hope to dwell for ever with so holy a God, I could not but be daily purifying myself. But O! what willt he end of this be? I have cause to tremble at that last and dreadfulest curse in the book of God, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let "him that is filthy be filthy still." Is it not as much as if God should say, Let them alone, I will spend no more rods upon them, no more means shall be used about them; but I will reckon with them for all together in another world? O my soul! what a dismal reckoning will that be! Ponder with thyself in the mean while those terrible and awakening texts, that, if possible, this fatal issue may be prevented. See Isa. i. 5. Hos. iv. 14. Jer. vi. 29, 30. Heb. vi. 8.

THE POEM.

MY heart's no fountain, but a standing lake
Of putrid waters; if therein I rake,
By serious search, O! what a noisome smell,
Like exhalations rising out of hell;
The stinking waters pump'd up from the hold,
Are as perfumes to seamen: but my soul
Upon the same account that they are glad,
(Its long continuance there) is therefore sad.
The scripture saith, "No soul God's face shall see,"
Till from such filthly lusts it cleansed be.
Yet though unclean, it may that way be rid,
As Herculus the Augean stable did.
Lord turn into my soul that cleansing blood,
Which from my Saviour's side flow'd as a flood.
Flow, sacred fountain, brim my banks; and flow
Till you have made my soul as white as snow.

CHAP. V.

Seamen foresee a danger, and prepare;
Yet few of greater dangers are aware.

OBSERVATION.

HOW watchful and quick-sighted are seamen to prevent dangers! if the wind die away, and then fresh up southerly: or if they see the sky hazy, they provide for a storm: if by the prospective-glass they know a pirate at a great distance, they clear the gun-room, prepare for fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him; if not, they keep close by the wind, make all the sail they can, and bear away. If they suppose themselves, by their reckoning, near land, how often do they sound? And if upon a coast with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a pilot that knows, and is acquainted with it?

APPLICATION.

Thus watchful and suspicious ought we to be in spiritual concernments. We should study, and be acquainted with Satan's wiles and policy. The apostle takes it for granted, that Christians are not ignorant of his devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11. "The serpent's eye (as "one saith) would do well in the dove's head." The devil is a cunning pirate, he puts out false colours, and ordinarily comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend.

O the manifold depths and stratagems of Satan to destroy souls!

though he have no wisdom to do himself good, yet he hath policy enough to do us mischief. He lies in ambush behind our lawful comforts and employments; yet, for the generality of men, how supine and careless are they, suspecting no danger? Their souls, like Laish dwell carelessly, their senses unguarded; O what an easy prize, and conquest, doth the devil make of them!

Indeed, if it were with us as with Adam in innocency, or as it was with Christ in the days of his flesh (who by reason of that overflowing fulness of grace that dwelt in him, the purity of his person, and the hypostatical union, was secured from the danger of all temptations) the case then were otherwise; but we have a traitor within, James i. 14, 15. as well as a tempter without: 1 Pet. v. 8. "Our "adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he "may devour:" And, like the beasts of the forest, poor souls lie down before him, and become his prey. All the sagacity, wit, policy, and foresight of some men, is summoned in to serve their bodies, and secure their fleshly enjoyments.

REFLECTION.

Lord! how doth the care, wisdom, and vigilance of men in temporal and external things, condemn my carelessness in the deep and dear concernments of my precious soul! what care and labour is there to secure a perishing life, liberty, or treasure! when was I thus solicitous for my soul, though its value be inestimable, and its danger far greater! Self-preservation is one of the deepest principles in nature. There is not the poorest fly, or worm, but will shun danger, if it can: yet I am so far from shunning those dangers to which my soul lies continually exposed, that I often run it upon temptations, and voluntarily expose it to its enemies. I see Lord how watchful, jealous, and laborious thy people are; what prayers, tears, and groans, searching of heart, mortification of lusts, guarding of senses; and all accounted too little by them. Have not I a soul to save or lose eternally, as well as they? Yet I cannot deny one fleshly lust, nor withstand one temptation. O how I am convinced and condemned, not only by other's care and vigilance, but my own too, in lesser and lower matters?

THE POEM.

I AM the ship whose bills of lading come
To more than man's or angel's art can sum,
Rich fraught with mercies, on the ocean, now
I float, the dang'rous ocean I do plow.
Storms rise, rocks threaten, and in every creek
Pirates and picaroons their prizes seek.
My soul should watch, look out, and use its glass,
Prevent surprisals timely; but, alas!

Temptations give it chace, 'tis grappled sure,
And boarded, whilst it thinks itself secure.
It sleeps, like Jonah, in the dreadful storm,
Altho' its case be dang'rous, and forlorn.
Lord, rouse my drowsy soul, lest it should knock,
And split itself upon some dang'rous rock.
If it of faith and conscience shipwreck make,
I am undone for ever; soul, awake!
Till thou arrive in heav'n, watch, and fear;
Thou may'st not say, till then, the coast is clear.

CHAP. VI.

How small a matter turns a ship about,
Yet we, against our conscience, stand it out.

OBSERVATION.

IT is just matter of admiration, to see so great a body as a ship is, and when under sail too, before a fresh and strong wind, by which it is carried, as the clouds, with marvellous force and speed, yet to be commanded with ease, by so small a thing as the helm is. The scripture takes notice of it as a matter worthy of our consideration. Jam. iii. 4. "Behold also the ships, which though they be great, "and driven of fierce winds; yet they are turned about with a small "helm, whithersoever the governor listeth." Yea, * Aristotle himself, that eagle-eyed philosopher, could not give a reason of it, but looked upon it as a very marvellous and wonderful thing.

APPLICATION.

To the same use and office has God designed conscience in man, which being rectified and regulated by the word and spirit of God, is to steer and order his whole conversation. Conscience is as the oracle of God, the judge and determiner of our actions, whether they be good or evil? And it lays the strongest obligation upon the creature to obey its dictates, that is imaginable; for it binds under the reason and consideration of the most absolute and sovereign will of the great God. So that as often as conscience from the word convinceth us of any sin or duty, it lays such a bond upon us to obey it, as no power under heaven can relax or dispense with. Angels cannot do it, much less man; for that would be to exalt themselves above God. Now therefore it is an high and dreadful way of sinning, to oppose and rebel against conscience, when it convinces of sin and duty. Conscience sometimes reasons it out with men, and shews them the

* Aristot. Secund. Μηχανικων, c. 5.

necessity of changing their way and course; arguing it from the clearest and most allowed maxims of right reason, as well as from the indisputable sovereignty of God.

As for instance: it convinceth their very reason that things of eternal duration are infinitely to be preferred to all momentary and perishing things, Rom. viii. 18. Heb. xi. 26. and it is our duty to chuse them, and make all secular and temporary concernments to stand aside, and give place to them. Yet though men be convinced of this, their stubborn will stands out, and will not yield up itself to the conviction.

Further, It argues from this acknowledged truth, that all the delight and pleasures in this world are but a miserable portion, and that it is the highest folly to adventure an immortal soul for them, Luke ix. 15. Alas! what remembrance is there of them in hell? They are as the waters that pass away. What have they left, of all their mirth and jollity, but a tormenting sting? It convinceth them clearly, also, that in matters of deep concernment it is an high point of wisdom, to apprehend and improve the right seasons and opportunities of them, Prov. x. 5. "He that gathers in summer is a wise son." Eccl. viii. 5. "A wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment. "There is a season to every purpose," Eccl. iii. 1. viz. a nick of time, an happy juncture, when if a man strikes in, he doth his work effectually, and with much facility: such seasons conscience convinceth the soul of, and often whispers thus in its ear: Now, soul, strike in, close with this motion of the Spirit, and be happy for ever; thou mayest never have such a gale for heaven any more. Now, though these be allowed maxims of reason, and conscience enforce them srongly on the soul, yet cannot it prevail; the proud, stubborn will rebels, and will not be guided by it. See Eph. ii. 3. Job xxxiv. 37. Isa. xlvi. 12. Ezek. ii. 4. Jer. xliv. 16.

REFLECTION.

Ah! Lord, such an heart have I had before thee; thus obstinate, thus rebellious, so uncontroulable by conscience. Many a time hath conscience thus whispered in mine ear, many a time hath it stood in my way, as the angel did in Balaam's, or the cherubims that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming swords turning every way. Thus hath it stood to oppose me in the way of my lusts. How often hath it calmly debated the case with me alone? and how sweetly hath it expostulated with me? How clearly hath it convinced of sin, danger, duty, with strong demonstration? How terrible hath it menaced my soul, and set the point of the threatening at my very breast? And yet my head-strong affections will not be remanded by it. I have obeyed the voice of every lust and temptation, Tit. iii. 3. but conscience hath lost its authority with me. Ah Lord! Lord! what a sad condition am I in, both in respect of sin and misery? My sin receives dreadful aggravations, for rebellion and presumption are hereby added to it.

I have violated the strongest bonds that ever were laid upon a creature. If my conscience had not thus convinced and warned, the sin had not been so great and crimson-coloured, Jam. iv. 17. Ah! this is to sin with an high hand, Numb. xv. 30. to come near to the great and unpardonable transgression, Psal. xix. 13. O how dreadful a way of sinning is this, with opened eyes! and as my sin is thus out of measure sinful, so my punishment will be out of measure dreadful, If I persist in this rebellion. Lord! thou hast said, such shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke xii. 48. yea, Lord, and if ever my conscience, which by rebellion is now grown silent, should be in judgment awakened in this life; O! what an hell should I have within me! how would it thunder and roar upon me, and surround me with terror?

Thy word assures me, that no length of time can wear out of its memory what I have done, Gen. xlii. 21. no violence or force can suppress it, Mat. xxvii. 4. no greatness of power can stifle it; it will take the mightiest monarch by the throat, Exod. x. 16. Dan. v. 6. no music, pleasures, or delights, can charm it, Job xx. 22. O conscience! thou art the sweetest friend, or the dreadfullest enemy in the world; thy consolations are incomparably sweet, and thy terrors insupportable. Ah! let me stand it out no longer against conscience; the very ship in which I sail is a confutation of my madness, that rushes greedily into sin against both reason and conscience, and will not be commanded by it; surely, O my soul, this will be bitterness in the end.

THE POEM.

A SHIP of greatest burthen will obey
The rudder; he that sits at helm, may sway
And guide its motion: If the pilot please,
The ship bears up, against both wind and seas.
My soul's the ship, affections are its sails,
Conscience the rudder. Ah! but Lord, what ails
My naughty heart, to shuffle in and out,
When its convictions bid it tack about?
Temptations blow a counter blast, and drive
The vessel where they please, tho' conscience strive.
And by its strong persuasions it would force
My stubborn will to steer another course.
Lord, if I run this course, thy word doth tell
How quickly I must needs arrive at hell.
Then rectify my conscience, change my will;
Fan in thy pleasant gales, my God, and fill
All my affections, and let nothing carry
My soul from its due course, or make it vary;
Then if the pilot's work thou wouldst perform,
I should bear bravely up against a storm.

CHAP. VII.

Thro' many fears and dangers seamen run,
Yet all's forgotten when they do return.

OBSERVATION.

WE have an elegant and lively description of their fears and dangers, Psal. cvii. 25, 26, 27. "He commandeth and raiseth the "stormy winds, which lift up the waves thereof: they mount up "to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is "melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro, they stagger like "a drunken man; they are at their wits end." Or, as it is in the Hebrew, "All wisdom is swallowed up." Suitable to which is that of the poet *.

"The pilot knows not what to chuse, or flee;
"Art stands amaz'd in ambiguity."

O what a strange and miraculous deliverance have many seamen had? How often have they yielded themselves for dead men, and verily thought the next sea would have swallowed them up? How earnestly then do they cry for mercy? and, like the Cymbrians, can pray in a storm, though they regard it not at other times, Psal. cvii. 28. Jonah i. 5, 6.

APPLICATION.

These dreadful storms do at once discover to us the mighty power of God in raising them, and the abundant goodness of God in preserving poor creatures in them.

1. The power of God is graciously manifested in raising them? the wind is one of the Lord's wonders, Psal. cvii. 24, 25. "They "that go down to the sea, see the works of the Lord, and his [won-"ders] in the deep; for he commandeth and raiseth the stormy "winds." Yea, ver. 18. God appropriates it as a peculiar work of his; "he causeth his [wind to blow]." Hence he is said in scripture to "bring them forth out of his treasury," Psal. cxxxvii. 7. there they are locked up, and reserved; not a gust can break forth till he command and call for it to go and execute his pleasure: Yea, he is said to "hold them in his fist," Prov. xxx. 4. What is more incapable of holding than the wind? yet God holds it: although it be a strong and terrible creature, he controls and rules it: yea, the scripture sets forth God, 'as riding upon the wings of the wind,' Psal xviii. 10. It is a borrowed speech from the manner of men, who when they would shew their pomp and greatness, ride upon some stately

* *Rector in incerto est: nec quid fugiatve petatve*
Invenit; ambiguis ars stupet ipsa malis. Ovid.

horse, or chariot; so the Lord, to manifest the greatness of his power, rides upon the wings of the wind, and will be admired in so terrible a creature.

And no less of his glorious power appears in remanding them, than in raising them. The heathens ascribe this power to their god Æolus, but we know this is the royalty and sole prerogative of the true God who made heaven and earth; it is he that "makes the "storm a calm," Psal. cvii. 29. and it is he that shifts and changes them from point to point, as he pleaseth; for he hath appointed them their circuits, Eccl. i. 6. "The wind goeth towards the south, "and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, "and returneth again according to its circuits."

2. And as we should adore his power in the winds, so ought we to admire his goodness in preserving men in the height of all their fury and violence. O what a marvellous work of God is here! that men should be kept in a poor weak vessel, upon the wild and stormy ocean, where the wind hath its full stroke upon them, and they are driven before it, as a wreck upon the seas; yet, I say, that God should preserve you there, is a work of infinite goodness and power. That those winds which do rend the very earth, mountains, and rocks, 1 Kings xix. 11. "Breaks the cedars, yea, the cedars of Lebanon, "shakes the wilderness, and makes the hinds to calve," Psal. xxix. 5, 8, 9. which naturalists say bring forth with greatest difficulty; surely your preservation, in such tempests, is an astonishing work of mercy. O how dreadful is this creature, the wind, sometimes to you! and how doth it make your hearts shake within you? If but a plank spring, or a bolt give way, you are all lost. Sometimes the Lord, for the magnifying of the riches of his goodness upon you, drives you to such exigencies, that, as Paul speaks, in a like case, Acts xxvii. 20. "All hope of being saved is taken away;" nothing but death before your eyes. The Lord commands a wind out of his treasury, bids it go and lift up the terrible waves, lock you in upon the shore, and drive you upon the rocks, so that no art can save you; and then sends you a piece of wreck, or some other means, to land you safe: And all this to give you an experiment of his goodness and pity, that you may learn to fear that God in whose hand your soul and breath are.

And it may be, for the present, your hearts are much affected; conscience works strongly, it smites you for sins formerly committed, such and such counsels of ministers, or relations slighted. Now, saith conscience, God is come in this storm to reckon with thee for these things. But, alas! all this is but a morning dew; no sooner is that storm without allayed, but all is quiet within too. How little of the goodness of God abides kindly, and effectually upon the heart?

REFLECTION.

How often hath this glorious power and goodness of God passed before me in dreadful storms and tempests at sea? He hath uttered his voice in these stormy winds, and spoken in a terrible manner by them; yet how little have I been affected with it? "The Lord hath "his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm," Nah. i. 3. To some he hath walked in ways of judgment and wrath, sending them down in a moment to hell: but to me in a way of forbearance and mercy. Ah! how often have I been upon the very brink of eternity! had not God shifted or allayed the wind in a moment, I had gone down into hell. What workings of conscience were at present upon me? And what terrible apprehensions had I then of my eternal condition? What vows did I make in that distress? And how earnestly did I then beg for mercy? But, Lord, though thy vows are upon me, yet have I been the same; yea, added to, and filled up the measure of my sins. Neither the bonds of mercy thou hast laid upon me, nor the sacred and solemn vows I have laid upon myself, could restrain me from those ways of iniquity, which then appeared so dreadful to me.

Ah! Lord, what an heart have I? What love, pity, and goodness have I sinned against? If God had but respited judgment so long, what a mercy were it. Sure I am, the damned would account it so; but to give me such a space to repent, ah! what an invaluable mercy is this? And do I thus requite the Lord, Deut. xxxii. 6. and pervert and abuse his goodness thus? Surely, O my soul, if this be the fruit of all thy preservations, they are rather reservations to some farther and sorer judgments. How dreadfully will justice at last avenge the quarrel of abused mercy, Josh. xxiv. 20. How grievously did God take it from the Israelites, that they provoked him at the sea, even at the red-sea? Psal. cvi. 7. where God had wrought their deliverance in such a miraculous way. Even thus have I sinned after the similitude of their transgressions; not only against the laws of God, but against the love of God. In the last storm he shot off his warning-piece, in the next he may discharge his murdering-piece against my soul and body. O my soul! hath he given thee "such "deliverances as these, and darest thou again break his command-"ments," Ezra ix. 13, 14. O let me pay the vows that my lips have uttered in my distress, lest the Lord recover his glory from me in a way of judgment.

THE POEM.

THE ship that now sails trim before a wind,
E'er the desired port it gains, may find
A tedious passage; gentle gales a while
Do fill its sails, the flatt'ring seas do smile,
The face of heav'n is bright on ev'ry side
The wanton porpoise tumbles on the tide.

Into their cabins now the seamen go,
And then turns out again, with, *What cheer, ho?*
All on a sudden darken'd are the skies,
The lamp of heav'n obscured, the winds doth rise;
Waves swell like mountains; Now their courage flags,
The masts are crack'd, the canvas torn to rags.
The vessel works for life; anon one cries,
The main mast's gone by th' board; another plies
The pump, until a third does strike them blank,
With, *Sirs, prepare for death, we've sprung a plank,*
Now to their knees they go, and on this wise
They beg for mercy, with their loudest cries:
Lord, save us but this once, and thou shalt see
What persons, for the future, we will be:
Our former time's mis-spent, but, with a vow,
We will engage, if thou wilt save us now,
To mend what is amiss. The gracious Lord,
Inclin'd to pity, takes them at their word;
The winds into their treasures he doth call,
Rebukes the stormy sea, and brings them all
To their desired haven: once a-shore,
And then their vows are ne'er remember'd more.
Thus soul's are shipwreck'd tho' the bodies live,
Unless in time thou true repentance give.

CHAP. VIII.

The navigator shifts his sails to take
All winds, but that which for his soul doth make.

OBSERVATION.

THE mariner wants no skill and wisdom to improve several winds, and make them serviceable to his end; a bare side wind, by his skill in shifting and managing the sails, will serve his turn: He will not lose the advantage of one breath or gale, that may be useful to him. I have many times wondered to see two ships sailing in a direct counter motion, by one and the same wind: Their skill and wisdom herein is admirable.

APPLICATION.

Thus prudent and skilful are men in secular and lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unskilful in the great and everlasting affairs of their souls! All their invention, judgment, wit, and memory, seem to be pressed for the service of the flesh. They can learn an art quickly, and arrive to a great deal of exactness in it; but in soul-matters, no knowledge at all. They can understand the Equator, Meridian, and Horizon; by the first they can tell the latitude of any

place, south or north, measuring it by the degrees in the Meridian; by the second they can tell you the longitude of a place, east and west, from the Meridian, measuring it by the degrees of the Equator; and by the third they can discern the divers risings and settings of the stars. And so in other arts and sciences, we find men endowed with rare abilities, and singular sagacity. Some have piercing apprehensions, solid judgments, stupendous memories, rare invention, and excellent elocution; but put them upon any spiritual supernatural matter, and the weakest Christian, even a babe in Christ, shall excel them therein, and give a far better account of regeneration, the work of grace, the life of faith, than these can. 1 Cor. i. 26. "Not "many wise men after the flesh, *&c.* But God hath chosen the "foolish things of this world," *&c.*

REFLECTION.

How inexcusable, then, art thou, O my soul! and how mute and confounded must thou needs stand before the bar of God in that great day? Thou hadst a talent of natural parts committed to thee, but which way have they been improved? I had an understanding indeed, but it was not sanctified; a memory, but it was like a sieve, that let go the corn, and retained nothing but husks and chaff; wit and invention, but, alas! none to do myself good. Ah! how will these rise in judgment against me, and stop my mouth? What account shall I give for them in that day?

Again, are men (otherwise prudent and skilful) such sots and fools in spiritual things; Then let the poor, weak Christian, whose natural parts are blunt and dull, admire the riches of God's free grace to him. O what an astonishing consideration is this! that God should pass by men of the profoundest natural parts, and chuse me, even poor me, whose natural faculties and endowments, compared with theirs, are but as lead to gold! Thus under the law he passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the lamb and dove. O how should it make me to advance grace, as Christ doth upon the same account, Mat. xi. 25. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid "these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes." And let it ever be a humbling consideration to me; for who made me to differ? Is not this one principal thing God aims at, in calling such as I am; that boasting may be excluded, and himself alone exalted?

THE POEM.

ONE thing doth very much affect my mind,
To see the seaman husband ev'ry wind;
With excellent art he shifts the sails, and knows
How to improve the fairest wind that blows.
If a direct, or fore right gale he want,
A side wind serves his turn, tho' ne'er so scant.

And will not this one day in judgment rise
Against your souls? Ah! can you be so wise
In smaller matters; what, and yet not know
How to improve fresh gales of grace that blow?
Fast moor'd in sin your wind-bound souls can lie,
And let these precious gales rise, blow, and die.
Sometimes on your affections you may feel
Such gracious breathings: Ah, but hearts of steel,
They move you not, nor cause you to relent;
Tho' able, like Elijah's wind, to rent
The rocks asunder: If you do not prize
Those breathings, other winds will shortly rise,
And from another quarter; those once gone,
Then next look out for an Euroclydon,
A dreadful storm: how soon, no man can tell;
But when it comes, 'twill blow such souls to hell.

CHAP. IX.

If seamen lose a gale, there they may lie;
The soul, when once becalm'd in sin, may die.

OBSERVATION.

SEAMEN are very watchful to take their opportunity of wind and tide, and it much concerns them so to be; the neglect of a few hours, sometimes loses them their passage, and proves a great detriment to them. They know the wind is an uncertain, variable thing; they must take it when they may: they are unwilling to lose one flow, or breath, that may be serviceable to them. If a prosperous gale offers, and they not ready, it repents them to lose it, as much as it would repent us to see a vessel of good wine, or beer, tapped and run to waste.

APPLICATION.

There are also seasons, and gales of grace, for our souls, golden opportunities of salvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loss and ruin of souls. God hath given unto man a day of visitation, which he hath limited, Heb. iv. 7. and keeps an exact account of every year, month, and day that we have enjoyed it, Luke xiii. 7. Jer. xxv. 3. Luke xix. 42. The longest date of it can be but the time of this life; this is our day to work in, Job ix. 4. and upon this small wire the weight of eternity hangs. But sometimes the season of grace is ended, before the night of death comes; the accepted time is gone, men frequently out-live it, Luke xix. 44. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Or, if the outward means of salvation be continued, yet the spirit many times withdraws from those means, and ceases any more to strive with men:

and then the blessing, power, and efficacy is gone from them, and instead thereof a curse seizeth the soul, Heb. vi. 7, 8. and Jer. vi. 29.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to our souls to apprehend these seasons. How pathetically doth Christ bewail Jerusalem upon this account! Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadst known at least in "this thy day, the things of thy peace! but now they are hid from "thine eyes." If a company of seamen are set a-shore upon some remote, uninhabited island, with this advice, to be aboard again exactly at such an hour, else they must be left behind; how doth it concern them to be punctual to their time? The lives of those men depend upon a quarter of an hour. Many a soul hath perished eternally, the gospel leaving them behind in their sins, because they knew not the time of their visitation.

REFLECTION.

What golden seasons for salvation hast thou enjoyed, O my soul? what halcyon days of gospel-light and grace hast thou had? How have the precious gales of grace blown to no purpose upon thee! and the Spirit waited and striven with thee in vain? "The kingdom of "heaven, (being opened in the gospel dispensation) hath suffered "violence." Multitudes have been pressing into it in my days, and I myself have sometimes been almost persuaded, and not far from the kingdom of God: I have gone as far as conviction for sin and misery, yea, I have been carried by the power of the gospel, to resolve and purpose to turn to God, and become a new creature; but sin hath been too subtle and deceitful for me: I see, my resolutions were but as an early cloud, or morning dew; and now my heart is cold and dead again, settled upon its lees. Ah! I have cause to fear and tremble, lest God hath left me under that curse, Rev. xx. 11. "Let "him that is filthy be filthy still." I fear I am become as that miry place, Ezek. xlvii. 11. that shall not be healed by the streams of the gospel, but *given to salt*, and cursed into perpetual barrenness. Ah Lord! wilt thou leave me so! and shall thy Spirit strive no more with me? Then it had been good for me that I had never been born. Ah! if I have trifled out this season, and irrecoverably lost it, then I may take up that lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. and say, "My harvest "is past, my summer is ended, and I am not saved."

Every creature knows its time, even the turtle, crane, and swallow, know the time of their coming, Jer. viii. 7. How brutish am I, that have not known the time of my visitation! O thou, that art the Lord of life and time, command one gracious season more for me, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be seen no more!

THE POEM.

A FRESH and whisking gale presents to-day,
But now the ships not ready; winds must stay,

And wait the seamen's leisure. Well, to-morrow
They will put out; but then, unto their sorrow,
That wind is spent, and by that means they gain
Perchance a month's repentance, if not twain.
At last another offers, now they're gone;
But ere they gain their port, the market's done.
For ev'ry work and purpose under heav'n,
A proper time and season God hath giv'n.
The fowls of heaven, swallow, turtle, crane,
Do apprehend it, and put us to shame.
Man hath his season too, but that mis-spent,
There's time enough his folly to repent.
Eternity's before him, but therein
No more such golden hours as these have been:
When these are pass'd away, then you shall find
That proverb true,—*Occasion's bald behind.*
Delays are dang'rous, see that you discern
Your proper seasons: O that you would learn
This wisdom from those fools that come too late
With fruitless cries, when Christ hath shut the gate.

CHAP. X.

By navigation one place stores another,
And by communion we must help each other.

OBSERVATION.

THE most wise God hath so dispensed his bounty to the several nations of the world, that one standing in need of another's commodities, there might be a sociable commerce and traffick maintained amongst them all, and all combining in a common league, may, by the help of navigation, exhibit mutual succours to each other. The staple commodities proper to each country, I find expressed by the poet, Bart. Coll.

Hence comes our sugars from Canary isles;
From Candy currants, muskadels, and oils;
From the Molucco's, spices; balsamum,
From Egypt; odours from Arabia come;
From India, gums, rich drugs, and ivory;
From Syria, mummy; black, red ebony,
From burning Chus; from Peru, pearl and gold;
From Russia, furs, to keep the rich from cold;
From Florence, silks; from Spain, fruit, saffron, sacks;
From Denmark, amber, cordage, firs, and flax;

From Holland, hops; horse from the banks of Rhine;
From France and Italy the choicest wine;
From England, wool; all lands as God distributes,
To the world's treasure pay their sundry tributes.

APPLICATION.

Thus hath God distributed the more rich and precious gifts and graces of his Spirit among his people; some excelling in one grace, some in another, though every grace, in some degree, be in them all; even as in *nature*, though there be all the faculties in all, yet some faculties are in some more lively and vigorous than in others; some have a more vigorous eye, others a more ready ear, others a more voluble tongue; so it is in *spirituals*. Abraham excelled in *faith*, Job in *patience*, John in *love*. These were their peculiar excellencies. All the elect vessels are not of one quantity; yet even those that excel others in some particular grace, come short in other respects of those they so excelled in the former, and may be much improved by converse with such as in some respects are much below them. The solid, wise, and judicious Christian may want that liveliness of affections and tenderness of heart that appear in the weak; and one that excels in gifts and utterance may learn humility from the very babes in Christ.

And one principal reason of this different distribution is to maintain fellowship among them all, 1 Cor. xii. 21. "The head cannot say to "the feet, I have no need of you." As in a family where there is much business to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their strength, Jer. vii. 18. "The children gather wood, the "fathers kindle the fire, the women knead the dough." So in the family of Christ, the weakest Christian is serviceable to the strong.

There be precious treasures in these earthen vessels, for which we should trade by mutual communion. The preciousness of the treasure should draw out our desires and endeavours after it; and the consideration of the brittleness of those vessels in which they are kept, should cause us to be the more expeditious in our trading with them, and make the quicker returns. For when those vessels (I mean bodies of the saints) are broken by death, there is no more to be gotten out of them. That treasure of grace which made them such profitable, pleasant, and desirable companions on earth, then ascends with them into heaven, where every grace receives its adolescence and perfection: and then, though they be ten thousand times more excellent and delightful than ever they were on earth, yet we can have no more communion with them till we come to glory ourselves. Now therefore it behoves us to be enriching ourselves by communication of what God hath dropt into us, and improvement of them, as one well notes *. We should do by saints, as we use to do by some choice book lent us for a few days, we should fix in our memories, or trans-

* Mr. Gurnal.

cribe all the choice notions we meet with in it, that they may be our own when the book is called for, and we can have it no longer by us.

REFLECTION.

Lord, how short do I come of my duty in communicating to, or receiving good by others! My soul is either empty and barren, or if there be any treasure in it, yet is but as a treasure locked up in some chest, whose key is lost, when it should be opened for the use of others. Ah Lord! I have sinned greatly, not only by vain words, but sinful silence. I have been of little use in the world.

How little also have I gotten by communion with others? Some it may be, that are of my own size, or judgment, or that I am otherwise obliged to, I can delight to converse with: but O, where is that largeness of heart and general delight I should have to, and in all thy people? How many of my old dear acquaintance are now in heaven, whose tongues were as *choice silver*, while they were here, Prov. x. 20. And blessed souls! how communicative were they of what thou gavest them? O what an improvement had I made of my talent this way, had I been diligent! Lord pardon my neglect of those sweet and blessed advantages. O let all my delight be in thy saints, who are the excellent of the earth. Let me never go out of their company, without an heart more warmed, quickened, and enlarged, than when I came amongst them.

THE POEM.

TO several nations God doth so distribute
His bounty, that each one must pay a tribute
Unto each other. Europe cannot vaunt,
And say, Of Africa I have no want.
America and Asia need not strive,
Which of itself can best subsist and live.
Each country's want, in something, doth maintain
Commerce betwixt them all. Such is the aim
And end of God, who doth dispense and give
More grace to some, their brethren to relieve.
This makes the sun ten thousand times more bright,
Because it is diffusive of its light;
Its beams are gilded gloriously; but then
This property doth gild them o'er again.
Should sun, moon, stars, impropriate all their light,
What dismal darkness would the world benight?
On this account men hate the vermin brood,
Because they take in much, but do no good.
What harm, if I at yours my candle light?
Except thereby I make your room more bright.
He that by pumping sucks and draws the spring
New streams, and sweeter, to the well doth bring.

Grace is a treasure in an earthen pot;
When death hath dash'd it, no more can be got
Out of that vessel: then, while it is whole,
Get out the treasure to enrich your soul.

CHAP. XI.

The rocks abide, though seas against them rage:
So shall the church, which is God's heritage.

OBSERVATION.

THE rocks, though situate in the boisterous and tempestuous ocean, yet abide firm and immoveable from age to age. The impetuous waves dash against them with great violence, but cannot remove them out of their place. And although sometimes they wash over them, and make them to disappear, yet there they remain fixed and impregnable.

APPLICATION.

This is a lively emblem of the condition of the church, amidst all dangers and oppositions wherewith it is encountered and assaulted in this world. These *metaphorical* waves roar and beat with violence against it, but with as little success as the sea against the rocks, Matt. xvi. 18. "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the [gates] "of hell shall not prevail against it." The gates of hell are the power and policy of hell; for it is conceived to be an allusive speech to the gates of the Jews, wherein their ammunition for war was lodged, which also were the seats of judicature, there sat the judges; but yet these gates of hell shall not prevail. Nay, this rock is not only invincible in the midst of their violence, but also breaks all that dash against it, Zech. xii. 3. "In that day I will make Jeru- "salem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden them- "selves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the "earth be gathered together against it." An allusion to one that essays to roll some great stone against the hill, which at last returns upon him, and crushes him to pieces.

And the reason why it is thus firm and impregnable, is not from itself; for alas, so considered, it is weak, and obnoxious to ruin; but from the almighty power of God, which guards and preserves it day and night, Psal. xlvi. 5, 6. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." Vatab. *Dum aspacit mane.* When the morning appears. Which notes (saith Calvin) God's assiduous and constant help and succour, which is extended in all dangers, as constantly as the sun arises. And this assiduous succour to his people, and their great security thereby, is set forth in the scriptures by a pleasant variety of metaphors and emblems, Zech. ii. 5. "I, saith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round

"about it." Some think this phrase alludes to the cherubim that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming swords: others to the fiery chariots round about Dathan, where Elisha was; but most think it to be an allusion to an ancient custom of travellers in the desarts; who, to prevent the assaults of wild beasts in the night, made a circular fire round about them, which was as a wall to them. Thus will God be to his people a wall of fire, which none can scale. So Exod. iii. 3, 4 5. we have an excellent emblem of the church's low and dangerous condition, and admirable preservation. You have here both a *marvel* and a *mystery*. The marvel was to see a bush all on fire and yet not consumed. The mystery is this, the bush represented the sad condition of the church of Egypt; the fire flaming upon it, the grievous afflictions, troubles, and bondage it was in there; the remaining of the bush unconsumed, the strange and admirable preservation of the church in those troubles. It lived there as the three noble Jews, untouched in the midst of a burning fiery furnace: and the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire, in the midst of the bush was nothing else but the Lord Jesus Christ, powerfully and graciously present with his people amidst all their dangers and sufferings. The Lord is exceeding tender over them, and jealous for them, as that expression imports, Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth "them toucheth the apple of mine eye." He that strrikes at them, strikes at the face of God, and at the most excellent part of the face, the eye, and at the most tender and precious part of the eye, the apple of the eye. And yet, as a learned modern observes, this people of whom he uses this tender and dear expression, were none of the best of Israel neither; but the residue that staid behind in Babylon, when their brethren were gone to rebuild the temple; and yet over these, he is as tender as a man is over his eye.

REFLECTION.

And is the security of the church so great! and its preservation so admirable, amidst all storms and tempests! then why art thou so prone and subject to despond, O my soul, in the day of Sion's trouble? Sensible thou wast, and oughtest to be: but no reason to hang down the head through discouragement, much less to forsake Zion in her distress, for fear of being ruined with her.

What David spake to Abiathar, 1 Sam. xxii. 23. that may Zion speak to all her sons and daughters in all their distresses: "Though "he that seeketh thy life seeketh mine also; yet with me shalt thou "be in safeguard." God hath entailed great salvation and deliverances upon Zion; and blessed are all her friends and favourers; the Rock of ages is its defence. Fear not, therefore, O my soul, though the hills be removed out of their place, and cast into the midst of the sea. O let my faith triumph, and my heart rejoice upon this ground of comfort. I see the same rocks now, and in the same place and condition they were many years ago. Though they have endured many

storms, yet there they abide; and so shall Zion, when the proud waves have spent their fury and rage against it.

THE POEM.

MESOPOTAMIA, situate in the seas,
May represent the church; or, if you please,
A rock, o'er which the waves do wash and swell,
May figure it; chuse either, which you will.
Winds strive upon those seas, and make a noise,
The lofty waves sometimes lift up their voice,
And, swelling high successively, do beat
With violence against it, then retreat.
They break themselves, but it abides their shock;
And when their rage is spent, there stands the rock.
Then they are out that do affirm and vote,
Peace, pomp, and splendor is the church's note.
And they deserve no less reproof that are
In Zion's troubles ready to despair.
This rock amidst far stronger rocks doth lie,
Which are its fence; so deep, so thick, so high,
They can't be batter'd, scal'd or undermin'd:
And these, eviron'd by them, daily find
Their bread ascertain'd; waters too secur'd:
Then shout and sing, ye that are thus inmur'd.

CHAP. XII.

What dangers run they for little gains,
Who, for their souls, would ne'er take half the pains!

OBSERVATION.

HOW exceeding solicitous and adventurous are seamen for a small portion of the world? How prodigal of strength and life for it? They will run to the ends of the earth, engage in a thousand dangers, upon the hopes and probability of getting a small estate. *Per mare, per terras, per mille pericula currunt.* Hopes of gain make them willing to adventure their liberty, yea, their life, and encourage them to endure heat, cold, and hunger, and a thousand straits and difficulties, to which they are frequently exposed.

APPLICATION.

How hot and eager are men's affections after the world! and how remiss and cold towards things eternal! they are careful, and troubled about many things; but seldom mind the great and necessary matter, Luke x. 40. They can rise early, go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness; but when did they so deny themselves for their poor souls? Their heads are full of designs and projects to get or advance an estate: "We will go into such a city, continue

" there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain," James iv. 13. This is the το εργον, the *master-design*, which engrosseth all their time, studies, and contrivances. The will hath past a decree for it, the heart and affections are fully let out to it, *They will be rich*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. This decree of the will, the Spirit of God takes deep notice of; and indeed it is the clearest and fullest discovery of a man's portion and condition: for look what is highest in the estimation, first and last in the thoughts, and upon which we spend our time and strength with delight; certainly, that is our treasure, Matth. vi. 20, 21. The heads and hearts of saints are full of solicitous cares and fears about their spiritual condition; the great design they drive on, to which all other things are but παρεργα, things by the by, is to make sure their calling and election. This is the *pondus*, the weight and bias of their spirit; if their hearts stray and wander after any other thing, this reduces them again.

REFLECTION.

Lord, this hath been my manner from my youth, may the carnal-minded man say; I have been labouring for the meat that perisheth; disquieting myself in vain, full of designs and projects for the world, and unwearied in my endeavours to compass an earthly treasure; yet therein I have either been checked and disappointed by Providence, or if I have obtained, yet I am no sooner come to enjoy that content and comfort I promised myself in it, but I am ready to leave it all, to be stript out of it by death, and in that day all my thoughts perish: But, in the mean time, what have I done for my soul? When did I ever break a night's sleep, or deny and pinch myself for it? Ah! fool that I am! to nourish and pamper a vile body, which must shortly lie under the clods, and become a loathsome carcase: and, in the mean time, neglect and undo my poor soul, which partakes of the nature of angels, and must live for ever. I have kept others vineyards, but mine own vineyard I have not kept. I have been a perpetual drudge and slave to the world; in a worse condition hath my soul been, than others that are condemned to the mines. Lord, change my treasure, and change my heart: O let it suffice that I have been thus long labouring in the fire for very vanity: now gather up my heart and affections in thyself, and let my great design now be, to secure a special interest in thy blessed self, that I may once say, " To me to live is Christ."

THE POEM.

THE face of man impress'd and stamp'd on gold,
With crown, and royal sceptres, we behold.
No wonder that a human face it gains,
Since head, heart, soul, and body, it obtains.
Nor is it strange a sceptre it should have,
That to its yoke the world doth so enslave.

Charm'd with its chinking note, away they go,
Like eagles to the carcase, ride and row.
Thro' worlds of hazards foolish creasures run,
That into its embraces they may come.
Poor Indians, in the mines, my heart condoles,
But seldom turns aside to pity souls,
Which are the slaves, indeed, that toil, and spend
Themselves upon its service. Surely, friend,
They are but sextons, to prepare, and make
Thy grave, within those mines, whence they do ta
And dig their ore. Ah! many souls, I fear,
Whose bodies live, yet lie entombed there.
Is gold so tempting to you? Lo! Christ stands,
With length of days, and riches in his hands.
Gold in the fire try'd he freely proffers,
But few regard, or take those golden offers.

CHAP. XIII.

Millions of creatures in the seas are fed:
Why then are saints in doubt of daily bread?

OBSERVATION.

THERE are multitudes of living creatures in the sea. The Psalmist saith, there are in it, "Things creeping innumerable, both "small and great beasts," Psal. civ. 25. and we read, Gen. i. 20. that when God blessed the waters, he said, "Let the waters bring "forth abundantly, both fish and fowl, that move in it, and fly about "it." Yet all those multitudes of fish and fowl, both in sea and land, are cared and provided for, Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. "Thou givest "them their meat in due season: thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

APPLICATION.

If God take care for the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, much more will he care and provide for those that fear him. "When "the poor and needy seeketh water, and there is none, and "their tongue faileth for thirst; I the Lord will hear them; I the "God of Israel will not forsake them," Isa. xii. 17. "Take no "thought for your life, (saith the Lord) what ye shall eat, or what "ye shall drink; or for the body what ye shall put on:" Which he backs with an argument from God's providence over the creatures, and enforceth it with a [*much rather*] upon them, Matt. vi. 25, 31. God would have his people be without *carefulness*, i. e. anxious care, 1 Cor. vii. 32. "And to cast their care upon him, for he careth for "them," 1 Pet. v. 7. There are two main arguments suggested in the gospel, to quiet and satisfy the hearts of saints in this particular:

the one is, that the gift of Jesus Christ amounts to more than all these things come to; yea, in bestowing him, he has given that which virtually and eminently comprehends all these inferior mercies in it, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him "up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" And 1 Cor. iii. 22. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and "Christ is God's." Another argument is, that God gives these temporal things to those he never gave his Christ unto, and therefore there is no great matter in them; yea, to those which, in a little while, are to be thrust into hell, Psal. xvii. 14. Now if God clothe and feed his enemies, if (to allude to that, Luke xii. 28.) he clothe the grass, which to-day is in its pride and glory in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, into hell: how much more will he clothe and provide for you that are saints?

This God, that feeds all the creatures is your Father, and a Father that never dies; and therefore you shall not be as exposed orphans that are the children of such a Father. "For he hath said, I will "never leave you nor forsake you," Heb. xiii. 3. I have read of a good woman, that in all wants and distresses was wont to encourage herself with that word, 2 Sam. xxii. 47. *The Lord liveth.* But one time, being in a deep distress, and forgetting that consolation, one of her little children came to her, and said, 'Mother, why weep ye 'so? What! is God dead now?' Which words, from a child, shamed her out of her unbelieving fears, and quickly brought her spirits to rest. O saint, whilst God lives thou canst not want what is good for thee.

How sweet a life might Christians live, could they but bring their hearts to a full subjection to the disposing will of God? to be content not only with what he commands and approves, but also with what he allots and appoints. It was a sweet reply that a gracious woman once made upon her death-bed, to a friend that asked, 'Whether 'she were more willing to live, or die?' She answered, 'I am plea-'sed with what God pleaseth.' 'Yea, (saith her friend) but if God 'should refer it to you, which would you chuse?' 'Truly, (said 'she) if God would refer it to me, I would refer it to him again.' Ah! blessed life, when the will is swallowed up in the will of God, and the heart at rest in his care and love, and pleased with all his appointments.

REFLECTION.

I remember my fault this day, may many a gracious soul say. Ah! how faithless and distrustful have I been, notwithstanding the great security God hath given to my faith, both in his word and works! O my soul, thou hast greatly sinned therein, and dishonoured thy Father! I have been worse to my Father than my children are to me. They trouble not their thoughts with what they shall eat or drink, or put on, but trust to my care and provision for that; yet I cannot trust

my Father, though I have ten thousand times more reason so to do, than they have to trust me, Matth. vii. 21. Surely, unless I were jealous of my Father's affection, I could not be so dubious of his provision for me. Ah! I should rather wonder that I have so much, than repine that I have no more. I should rather have been troubled that I have done no more for God, than that I have received no more from God. I have not proclaimed it to the world by my conversation, that I have found a sufficiency in him alone, as the saints have done, Hab. iii. 17, 18. How have I debased the faithfulness and all-sufficiency of God, and magnified these earthly trifles, by my anxiety about them? Had I had more faith, a light purse would not have made such an heavy heart. Lord, how often hast thou convinced me of this folly, and put me to the blush, when thou hast confuted my unbelief! so that I have resolved never to distrust thee more, and yet new exigencies renew this corruption. How contradictory also hath my heart and my prayers been? I pray for them conditionally, and with submission to thy will; I dare not say to thee, I must have them; yet this hath been the language of my heart and life. O convince me of this folly!

THE POEM.

VARIETY of curious fish are caught
Out of the sea, and to our tables brought;
We pick the choicest bits, and then we say,
We are sufficed; come, now take away.
The table's voided, you have done; but fain
I would persuade to have it brought again.
The sweetest bit of all remains behind,
Which, through your want of skill, you could not find.
A bit for faith, have you not found it? Then
I've made but half a meal; come, taste again,
Hast thou consider'd, O my soul! that hand
Which feeds those multitudes in sea and land!
A double mercy in it thou shouldst see;
It fed them first, and then with them fed thee.
Food in the waters we should think were scant
For such a multitude, yet none do want.
What num'rous flocks of birds about me fly?
When saw I one, through want, fall down, and die?
They gather what his hand to them doth bring,
Tho' but a worm, and at that feast can sing.
How full a table doth my Father keep?
Blush then my naughty heart, repent, and weep;
How faithless and distrustful hast thou been,
Altho' his care and love thou oft hast seen?
Thus in a single dish you have a feast,
Your first and second course, the last the best.

CHAP. XIV

Sea-waters drained through the earth, are sweet;
So are th' afflictions which God's people meet.

OBSERVATION.

THE waters of the sea, in themselves, are brackish and unpleasant, yet being exhaled by the sun, and condensed into clouds, they fall down into pleasant showers; or if drained through the earth, their property is thereby altered, and that which was so salt in the sea, becomes exceeding sweet and pleasant in the springs. This we find by constant experience, the sweetest crystal spring came from the sea, Eccl. i. 7.

APPLICATION.

Afflictions in themselves are evil, Amos ii. 6. very bitter and unpleasant. See Heb. xii. 11. Yet not morally and intrinsically evil, as sin is; for if so, the holy God would never own it for his own act as he doth, Mic. iii. 2. but always disclaimeth sin, James i. 3. Besides, if it were so evil, it could, in no case or respect, be the object of our election and desire, as in some cases it ought to be, Heb. xi. 25. but it is evil, as it is the fruit of sin, and grievous unto sense, Heb. xii. 11. But though it be thus brackish and unpleasant in itself, yet, passing through Christ and the covenant, it loses that ungrateful property, and becomes pleasant in the fruits and effects thereof unto believers.

Yea, such are the blessed fruits thereof, that they are to account it all joy when they fall into divers afflictions, Jam. i. 2. David could bless God that he was afflicted, and many a saint hath done the like. A good woman once compared her afflictions to her children: 'For, '(saith she) they put me in pain in bearing them; yet as I know not 'which child, so neither which affliction I could be without.'

Sometimes the Lord sanctifies afflictions to discover the corruption that is in the heart, Deut. viii. 2. it is a furnace to shew the dross. Ah! when a sharp affliction comes, then the pride, impatience, and unbelief of the heart appear: *Matura vexatio prodit seipsam.* When the water is stirred, then the mud and filthy sediment that lay at the bottom rise. Little, saith the afflicted soul, did I think there had been in me that pride, self-love, distrust of God, carnal fear, and unbelief, as I now find. O where is my patience, my faith, my glory in tribulation? I could not have imagined the sight of death would have so appalled me, the loss of outward things have so pierced me. Now what a blessed thing is this to have the heart thus discovered.

Again, sanctified afflictions discover the emptiness and vanity of the creature. Now, the Lord hath stained its pride, and veiled its tempting splendor, by this or that affliction; and the soul sees what an empty, shallow, deceitful thing it is. The world (as one hath

truly observed) is then only great in our eyes, when we are full of sense and self: but now affliction makes us more spiritual, and then it is nothing. It drives them nearer to God, makes them see the necessity of the life of faith, with multitudes of other benefits.

But yet these sweet fruits of afflictions do not naturally, and of their own accord, spring from it; no, we may as well look for grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as for such fruits from affliction, till Christ's sanctifying hand and art have passed upon them.

The reason why they become thus sweet and pleasant (as I noted before) is, because they run now in another channel; Jesus Christ hath removed them from mount Ebal to Gerizim; they are no more the effects of vindictive wrath, but paternal chastisement. And, as *Mr. Case well notes, 'a teaching affliction is to the saints, the re-'sult of all the offices of Jesus Christ. As a king, he chastens; as 'a prophet, he teacheth, *viz.* by chastening; and, as a priest, he 'hath purchased this grace of the Father, that the dry rod might 'blossom, and bear fruit.' Behold, then, a sanctified affliction is a cup, whereinto Jesus hath wrung and pressed the juice and virtue of all his mediatorial offices. Surely, that must be a cup of generous, royal wine, like that in the supper, a cup of blessing to the people of God.

REFLECTION.

Hence may the unsanctified soul draw matter of fear and trouble, even from its unsanctified troubles. And thus it may reflect upon itself: O my soul! what good hast thou gotten by all, or any of thy afflictions? God's rod hath been dumb to thee, or thou deaf to it. I have not learned one holy instruction from it; my troubles have left me the same, or worse than they found me; my heart was proud, earthly, and vain before, and so it remains still; they have not purged out, but only given vent to the pride, murmur, and atheism of my heart. I have been in my afflictions, as that wicked Ahaz was in his, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. who, "in the midst of his distress, "yet trespassed more and more against the Lord." When I have been in storms at sea, or troubles at home, my soul within me hath been as a raging sea, casting up mire and dirt. Surely this rod is not the rod of God's children; I have proved but dross in the furnace, and I fear the Lord will put me away as dross, as he threatens to do to the wicked, Psal. cxix. 119.

Hence also should gracious souls draw much encouragement and comfort amidst all their troubles. O these are the fruits of God's fatherly love to me! why should I fear in the day of evil! or tremble any more at affliction? Though they seem as a serpent at a distance, yet are they a rod in the hand. O blessed be that skilful and gracious hand, that makes the rod, the dry rod to blossom, and bear such precious fruit.

* Correction, Instruction, p. 82.

Lord, what a mystery of love lies in this dispensation! that sin, which first brought afflictions into the world, is now itself carried out of the world by affliction, Rom. v. 12. Isa. vii. 9. O what can frustrate my salvation, when those very things that seem most to oppose it, are made subservient to it, and, contrary to their own nature, do promote and further it?

THE POEM.

'TIS strange to hear what different censures fall
Upon the same affliction; some do call
Their troubles sweet, some bitter; others meet
Them both mid-way, and call them bitter sweet.
But here's the question still, I fain would see,
Why sweet to him, and bitter unto me?
Thou drink'st them, dregs and all, but others find
Their troubles sweet, because to them refin'd
And sanctify'd; which difference is best,
By such apt similies as these exprest:
From salt and brackish seas fumes rise and fly,
Which, into clouds condens'd, obscure the sky;
Their property there alter'd, in few hours,
Those brackish fumes fall down in pleasant show'rs:
Or as the dregs of wine and beer, distill'd
By limbec, with ingredients, doth yield
A cordial water, tho' the lees were bitter,
From whence the chymist did extract such liquor.
Then marvel not, that one can kiss that rod,
Which makes another to blaspheme his God.
O get your troubles sweeten'd and refin'd,
Or else they'll leave bitter effects behind.
Saints troubles are a cord, let down my love,
To pully up their hearts to things above.

CHAP. XV.

The seas within their bounds the Lord contains:
He also men and devils holds in chains.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a wonderful work of God to limit and bound such a vast and furious creature as the sea, which, according to the judgment of many learned men, is higher than the earth; and that it hath a propension to overflow it, is evident both from its nature and motion: were it not that the great God had laid his law upon it. And this is a work wherein the Lord glories, and will be admired. Psal. civ. 9. "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over, that "they turn not again to cover the earth." Which it is clear they would do, were they not thus limited So Job xxxviii. 8, 10, 11.

" Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had " issued out of the womb? I brake up for it my decreed place, and " set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no " further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

APPLICATION.

And no less is the glorious power and mercy of God discovered in bridling the rage and fury of Satan and his instruments, that they break not in upon the inheritance of the Lord, and destroy it. " Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of " wrath thou shalt restrain," Psal. lxxvi. 10. By which it is more than hinted, that there is a world of rage and malice in the hearts of wicked men, which fain would, but cannot vent itself, because the Lord restrains, or, as in the Hebrew, *girds it up*. Satan is the envious one, and his rage is great against the people of God, Rev. xii. 12. But God holds him, and all his instruments in a chain of providence; and it is well for God's people that it is so.

They are limited as the sea, and so the Lord in a providential way speaks to them, " Hitherto shall ye come, and no further." Sometimes he ties them up so short, that they cannot touch his people, though they have the greatest opportunities and advantages. Psal. cv. 12, 13, 14, 15. " When they were but a few men in number; " yea, very few, and strangers in it; when they went from one na- " tion to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered " no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, " saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." And sometimes he permits them to touch and trouble his people, but then sets bounds and limits to them, beyond which they must not pass. That is a pregnant text to this purpose, Rev. ii. 10. " Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may " be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days."

Here are four remarkable limitations upon Satan and his agents in reference to the people of God: a limitation as to the *persons*, not all, but some; a limitation of the *punishment*, a prison, not a grave, not hell; a limitation upon them as to the *end*, for trial, not ruin; and lastly, as to the *duration*, not as long as they please, but ten days.

REFLECTION.

O my soul! what marrow and fatness, comfort and consolation mayest thou suck from the breast of this truth in the darkest day of trouble? Thou seest how the flowing seas drives to overwhelm the earth. Who has arrested it in its course, and stopt its violence? who has confined it to its place? Certainly none other but the Lord. When I see it threaten the shore with its proud, furious, and insulting waves, I wonder it doth not swallow up all: but I see it no sooner touch the sands, which God hath made its bounds, but it retires, and, as it were, with a kind of submission, respects those limits which God hath set it.

Thus the fiercest element is repressed by the feeblest things: thou seest also how full of wrath and fury wicked men are, how they rage like the troubled sea, and threaten to overwhelm thee, and all the Lord's inheritance: and then the floods of ungodly men make thee afraid; yet are they restrained by an invisible, gracious hand, that they cannot execute their purpose, nor perform their enterprize. How full of devils and devilized men is this lower world? Yet, in the midst of them all, hast thou hitherto been preserved. O! my soul, admire and adore that glorious power of God, by which thou art kept unto salvation. Is not the preservation of a saint in the midst of such hosts of enemies as great a miracle, though not so sensible as the preservation of those three noble Jews in the midst of the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the den of lions? For there is as strong a propension in Satan and wicked men, to destroy the saints, as in the fire to burn, or a lion to devour. O! then, let me cheerfully address myself to the faithful discharge of my duty, and stand no longer in a slavish fear of creatures, who can have no power against me but what is given them from above, John xix. 11. And no more shall be given than shall turn to the glory of God, Psal. lxxvi. 10. and the advantage of my soul, Rom. viii. 28.

THE POEM.

THIS world's a forest, where, from day to day,
Bears, wolves, and lions, range and seek their prey;
Amidst them all poor harmless lambs are fed,
And by their very dens in safety led.
They roar upon us, but are held in chains;
Our shepherd is their keeper, he maintains
Our lot. Why then should we so trembling stand?
We meet them, true, but in their keeper's hand.
He that to raging seas such bounds hath put,
The mouths of rav'nous beasts can also shut.
Sleep in the woods, poor lambs, yourselves repose
Upon his care, whose eyes do never close.
If unbelief in you don't lose their chain,
Fear not their struggling, that's but all in vain.
If God can check the waves by smallest sand,
A twined thread may hold these in his hand.
Shun sin, keep close to Christ; for other evils
You need not fear, tho' compass'd round with devils.

CHAP. XVI.

To sea without a compass none dare go:
Our course without the word is even so.

OBSERVATION.

OF how great use and necessity is the compass to seamen! thoug

they can coast a little way by the shore, yet they dare not venture far into the ocean without it: it is their guide, and directs and shapes their course for them: and if by the violence of wind and weather they are driven beside their due course, yet by the help of this they are reduced, and brought to rights again. It is wonderful to consider, how, by the help of this guide, they can run in a direct line many hundred leagues, and at last fall right with the smallest island; which is in the ocean comparatively, but as the head of a small pin upon a table.

APPLICATION.

What the compass and all other mathematical instruments are to the navigator, that and much more is the word of God to us in our course to heaven. This is our compass to steer our course by, and it is truly touched; he that orders his conversation by it shall safely arrive in heaven at last. Gal. vi. 16. "As many as walk according "to this rule, peace be on them and mercy."

This word is as necessary to us in our way to glory, as a lamp or lanthorn is in a dark night, Psal. cxix. 105. that is a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts, 2 Pet. i. 19. If any that profess to know it and own it as a rule, miss heaven at last, let them not blame the word for misguiding them, but their own negligent and deceitful hearts, that shuffle in and out, and shape not their course and conversation according to its prescriptions.

What blame can you lay upon the compass, if you steer not exactly by it? How many are there, that neglecting this rule, will coast it to heaven by their own reason? No wonder such fall short, and perish in the way. This is a faithful guide, and brings all that follow it to a blessed end; "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after- "wards receive me to glory," Psal. lxxiii. 24. The whole hundred and nineteenth psalm is spent in commendation of its transcendent excellency and usefulness. Luther professed that he prized it so highly, that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it. Lay but this rule before you, and walk accurately by it, and you cannot be out of your way to heaven, Psal. cxix. 30. "I "have chosen the way of truth, (or the true way;) thy judgment "have I laid before me." Some indeed have opened their detracting blasphemous mouths against it; as Julian, that vile apostate, who feared not to say, there was as good matter in Phocillides as in Solomon, in Pindarus's odes, as in David's psalms.

And the papists generally slight it, making it a lame, imperfect rule; yea, making their own traditions the touchstone of doctrines, and foundation of faith. Montanus tells us, that although the apostle would have sermons and service celebrated in a known tongue, yet the church, for very good cause, hath otherwise ordered it. Gilford called it the mother of heresies. Bonner's chaplain judged it worthy to be burnt as a strange doctrine. They set up their inventions above it, and frequently come in with a *non obstante* against Christ's institu-

tions. And thus do they make it void, or, as the word ηκυρωσατε, signifies, Matth. xv. 6. unlord it, and take away its authority as a rule. But those that have thus slighted it, and followed the by-paths unto which their corrupt hearts have led them, they take not hold of the paths of life, and are now in the depths of hell. All other lights to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but false fires that will lead men into the pits and bogs of destruction at last

REFLECTION.

And is thy word a compass, to direct my course to glory? O where am I then like to arrive at last, that in all my course have neglected it, and steered according to the counsel of my own heart! Lord, I have not made thy word the man of my council, but consulted with flesh and blood; I have not enquired at this oracle, nor studied it, and made it the guide of my way, but walked after the sight of my eyes, and the lust of my heart. Whither, Lord! can I come at last, but to hell, after this way of reckoning? Some have slighted thy word professedly, and I have slighted it practically. I have a poor soul embarked for eternity, it is now floating on a dangerous ocean, rocks and sands on every side, and I go a-drift before every wind of temptation, and know not where I am. Ah, Lord! convince me of the danger of this condition. O convince me of my ignorance in thy word, and the fatal consequence and issue thereof. Lord, let me now resolve to study, prize, and obey it; hide it in my heart, that I may not sin against it. Open my understanding, that I may understand the scriptures; open my heart to entertain it in love. O thou that hast been so gracious to give a perfect rule, give me also a perfect heart to walk by that rule to glory!

THE POEM.

THIS world's a sea, wherein a num'rous fleet
Of ships are under sail. Here you shall meet
Of ev'ry rate and size; frigates, galleons,
The nimble ketches, and small pickeroons:
Some bound to this port; some where winds and weather
Will drive them, they are bound they know not whither.
Some steer away for heaven, some for hell;
To which some steer, themselves can hardly tell.
The winds do shape their course, which tho' it blow
From any point, before it they must go.
They are directed by the wind and tide,
That have no compass to direct and guide:
For want of this must run themselves a ground,
Brave ships are cast away, poor souls are drown'd,
Thy word our compass is, to guide our way
To glory; it reduces such as stray.
Lord, let thy word dwell richly in my heart,
And make me skilful in this heavenly art:

O let me understand, and be so wise,
To know upon what point my country lies:
And having set my course directly thither,
Great God preserve me in the foulest weather.
By reason some will coast it; but I fear,
Such coasters never will drop anchor there.
Thy word is truly touch'd, and still directs
A proper course, which my base heart neglects.
Lord, touch my iron heart, and make it stand
Pointing to thee its loadstone. To that land
Of rest above, let ev'ry tempest drive
My soul, where it would rather be than live.

CHAP. XVII.

Look as the sea, by turns, doth ebb and flow,
So their estates, that use it, come and go.

OBSERVATION.

THE sea hath its alternate course and motion, its ebbings and flowings; no sooner is it high water, but it begins to ebb again, and leave the shore naked and dry, which but a little before it covered and overflowed. And as its tide, so also its waves are the emblem of inconstancy, still rolling and tumbling, this way and that, never fixed and quiet. *Instabilis unda: as fickle as a wave*, is common, to a proverb, See Jam. i. 6. "He that wavereth is like a wave of "the sea driven with the wind, and tossed." So Isa. lvii. 20. "It "cannot rest."

APPLICATION.

Thus mutable and inconstant are all outward things, there is no depending on them: nothing of any substance, or any solid consistence in them, 1 Cor. vii. 31. "The fashion of this world passeth "away." It is an high point of folly to depend upon such vanities: Prov. xxiii. 5. "Why wilt thou set (or, as it is in the Hebrew, cause) "thine eyes to fly upon that which is not? For riches certainly "make themselves wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards heaven." In flying to us (saith Augustine) they have, *alas vix quidem passerinas*, scarce a sparrow's wings; but in flying from us, wings as an eagle. And those wings they are said to make to themselves; i. e. the cause of its transitoriness is in itself; the creature is subjected to vanity by sin; they are sweet flowers, but withered presently, James i. 10. "As the flower of the grass, so shall the rich man fade "away." The man is like the stalk or grass, his riches are the flower of the grass; his glory and outward beauty, the stalk, is soon withered, but the flower much sooner. This is either withered upon, or blown off from it, while the stalk abides. Many a man outlives his

estate and honour, and stands in the world as a bare dry stalk in the field, whose flower, beauty, and bravery are gone: one puff of wind blows it away, one churlish easterly blast shrivels it up, 1 Pet. iv. 24.

How mad a thing is it, then, for any man to be lifted up in pride, upon such a vanity as this is! to build so lofty and over-jetting a roof upon such a feeble, tottering foundation! We have seen meadows full of such curious flowers, mown down and withered; men of great estates impoverished suddenly; and when, like a meadow that is mown, they have begun to recover themselves again, (as the phrase is) the Lord hath sent "grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of "the latter growth," Amos vii. 2. Just as the grasshoppers and other creatures, devour the second tender herbage as soon as the field begins to recover its verdure; so men, after they have been denuded and blasted by Providence, they begin after a while to flourish again; but then comes some new affliction and blasts all. None have more frequent experience of this than you that are merchants and seamen, whose estates are floating; and yet such as have had the highest security in the eye of reason, have, notwithstanding, experienced the vanity of these things. Henry IV. a potent prince was reduced to such a low ebb, that he petitioned for a prebend's place in the church of Spire. Gallimer, king of the Vandals, was brought so low, that he sent to his friends for a spunge, a loaf of bread, and an harp: a spunge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace him in his misery. The story of Bellisarius is very affecting: he was a man famous in his time, general of an army, yet having his eyes put out, and stripped of all earthly comforts, was led about crying, *Date obolum Bellisario.* Give one penny to poor Bellisarius. Instances in history of this kind are infinite. Men of the greatest estates and honours have nevertheless become the very *ludibria fortunæ*, as one speaks, the very scorn of fortune.

Yea, and not only wicked men that have gotten their estates by rapine and oppression, have lived to see them thus scattered by Providence: but sometimes godly men have had their estates, how justly soever acquired, thus scattered by providence also. Whoever had an estate, better gotten, better bottomed, or better managed, than Job? yet all was overthrown and swept away in a moment; though in mercy to him, as the issue demonstrated.

Oh then! what a vanity is it to set the heart, and let out the affections on them! you can never depend too much upon God, nor too little upon the creature, 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge them that are "rich in this world, that they be not high-minded and trust in un-"certain riches."

REFLECTION.

Are all earthly things thus transitory and vain? Then what a reproach and shame is it to me, that the men of this world should be more industrious and eager in the prosecution of such vanities, than

I am to enrich my soul with solid and everlasting treasure? O that ever a sensual lust should be more operative in them than the love of God in me! O my soul, thou dost not lay out thy strength and earnestness for heaven with any proportion to what they do for the world. I have indeed higher motives, and a surer reward than they: but as I have an advantage above them herein, so they have an advantage above me in the strength and entireness of the principle by which they are acted. What they do for the world, they do it with all their might; they have no contrary principle to oppose them; their thoughts, strength, and affections are entirely carried in one channel; but I find "a law in my members warring against the law "of my mind;" I must strive through a thousand difficulties and contradictions to the discharge of a duty. O my God! shall not my heart be more enlarged in zeal, love, and delight in thee, than theirs are after their lusts? O let me once find it so.

Again, is the creature so vain and unstable? Then why are my affections so hot and eager after it? And why am I so apt to doat upon its beauty, especially when God is staining all its pride and glory! Jer. xlv. 5, 6. Surely it is unbecoming the spirit of a Christian at any time, but at such a time we may say of it, as Hushai of Ahithophel's counsel, "It is not good at this time."

O that my spirit were raised above them, and my conversation more in heaven! O that like that angel, Rev. x. 1, 2. which came down from heaven, and set one foot upon the sea, and another upon the earth, having a crown upon his head, so I might set one foot upon all the cares, fears, and terrors of the world, and another upon all the tempting splendor and glory of the world, treading both underfoot in the dust, and crowning myself with nothing but spiritual excellencies and glory!

THE POEM.

JUDGE in thyself, O Christian! is it meet
To set thy heart on what beasts set their feet?
'Tis no hyperbole, if you be told,
You dig for dross with mattocks made of gold.
Affections are too costly to bestow
Upon the fair-fac'd nothings here below.
The eagle scorns to fall down from on high,
(The proverb saith) to catch the silly fly.
And can a Christian leave the face of God,
T' embrace th' earth, or doat upon a clod?
Can earthly things thy heart so strangely move,
To tempt it down from the delights above;
And now to court the world at such a time
When God is laying judgment to the line?
'Tis just like him that doth his cabin sweep
And trim, when all is sinking in the deep:

Or like the silly bird that to her nest
Doth carry straws, and never is at rest,
Till it be feather'd well, but doth not see
The axe beneath, that's hewing down the tree.
If on a thorn thy heart itself repose
With such delight, what if it were a rose?
Admire, O saint, the wisdom of thy God,
Who of the self-same tree doth make a rod,
Lest thou shouldst surfeit on forbidden fruit,
And live not like a saint, but like a brute.

CHAP. XVIII.

Like hungry lions, waves for sinners gape:
Leave then your sins behind, if you'll escape.

OBSERVATION.

THE waves of the sea are sometimes raised by God's commission, to be executioners of his threatenings upon sinners. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord to Tarshish, the text saith, "The "Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty "tempest, so that the ship was like to be broken," Jonah i. 4. These were God's bailiffs to arrest the run-away prophet. And Psal. cxlviii. 8. The stormy winds are said to *fulfil his word;* not only his word of command, in rising when God bids them, but his word of *threatening* also. And hence it is called a *destroying wind*, Jer. li. 1. and a *stormy wind in God's fury*, Ezek. xiii. 13.

APPLICATION.

If these be the executioners of God's threatenings, how sad then is their condition that put forth to sea under the guilt of all their sins? Or, if God should commissionate the winds to go after and arrest thee for all thou owest him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a divine threat, before all be cleared betwixt God and thee? Sins in scripture are called debts, Matth. vi. 12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to him, or ought to sin, but *metonymically*, because they render the sinner obnoxious to God's judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to suffer punishment. All sinners must undergo the curse, either in their own person, according to the express letter of the law, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10. or their surety, according to the tacit intent of the law, manifested to be the mind of the lawgiver, Gen. iii. 13, 14.

Now he that by faith hath interest in this surety, hath his discharge, his *quietus est*, sealed in the blood of Christ; all process at law, or from the law, is stopt, Rom. viii. 1. But if thou be an impenitent, persisting sinner, thy debt remains upon thine own score,

"And be sure thy sin will find thee out, wherever thou goest," Numb. xxxii. 23. i. e. God's revenging hand for sin will be upon thee: Thou mayest lose the sight and memory of thy sins, but they lose not the sight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth the fleeting game upon the scent, till they have fetched thee up: And then consider, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the "living God," Heb. x. 31. How soon may a storm arrest, and bring thee before the bar of God?

REFLECTION.

O my soul, what a case art thou in, if this be so? Are not all thy sins yet upon thine own score? Hast not thou made light of Christ, and that precious blood of his, and hitherto persisted in thy rebellion against him? And what can the issue of this be at last, but ruin? There is abundant mercy indeed for returning sinners; but the gospel speaks of none for persisting and impenitent sinners. And though many who are going on in their sins are overtaken by grace, yet there is no grace promised to such as go on in sin. O! if God should arrest me by the next storm, and call me to an account for all that I owe him, I must then lie in the prison of hell to all eternity; for I can never pay the debt; nay, all the angels in heaven cannot satisfy for it. Being christless, I am under all the curses in the book of God; a child of Hagar. Lord pity and spare me a little longer! O discover thy Christ unto me, and give me faith in his blood, and then thou art fully satisfied at once, and I discharged for ever. O require not the debt at my hand, for then thou wilt never be satisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, Lord, is there in my blood! O my soul, make haste to this Christ, thy refuge city; thou knowest not how soon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.

THE POEM.

THY sins are debts, God puts them to account;
Canst tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?
Thou fill'st the treasure of thy sins each hour.
Into his vials God doth also pour
Proportionable wrath: Thou seest it not;
But yet assure thyself, there's drop for drop.
For every sand of patience running out,
A drop of wrath runs in. Soul, look about!
God's treasure's almost full, as well as thine:
When both are full, O then the dreadful time
Of reck'ning comes; thou shalt not gain a day
Of patience more, but there hastes away
Heaven's pursevant, who comes upon the wing
With his commission seal'd, to take and bring.
Dost still reject Christ's tenders? Well, next storm
May be the bailiff order'd to perform
This dreadful office. O then restless be,
Till God in Christ be reconcil'd to thee.

The sum is great, but if a Christ thou get,
Fear not, a prince can pay a beggar's debt.
Now if the storm should rise, thou need'st not fear;
Thou art, but the delinquent is not there.
A pardon'd soul to sea may boldly go:
He fears not bailiffs, that doth nothing owe.

CHAP. XIX.

To save the ship, rich lading's cast away,
Thy soul is shipwreck'd if thy lusts do stay.

OBSERVATION.

IN storms and distresses at sea, the richest commodities are cast overboard; they stand not upon it, when life and all is in jeopardy and hazard, Jonah i. 5. The mariners cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it. And, Acts xxvii. 18, 19. they cast out the very tacklings of the ship. How highly soever men prize such commodities, yet reason tells them, it were better these should perish, than life. Satan himself could say, Job i. "Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life."

APPLICATION.

And surely, it is every way as highly reasonable, that men should mortify, cast out, and cut off their dearest lusts, rather than their immortal souls should sink and perish in the storm of God's wrath. Life indeed is a precious treasure, and highly valued by men: You know what Solomon saith, Eccl. ix. 4. That "a living dog is better than "a dead lion." And we find men willing to part with their estates, limbs, or any outward comfort for the preservation of it. The woman in the gospel spent all she had on the physicians for her health, a degree below life. Some men indeed do much overvalue their lives, and part with Christ and peace of conscience for it; but he that thus saves it, shall lose. Now if life be so much worth, what then is the soul worth? Alas! life is but "a vapour, which appeareth "for a little while, and then vanisheth away," Jam. iv. 14.

Life indeed is more worth than all the world, but my soul is more worth than ten thousand lives. *Nature* teacheth you to value the first so high, and *grace* should teach you to value the second much higher, Mat. xix. 20. Now here is the case: Either you must part with your sins, or with your souls; if these be not cast out, both must sink together. "If ye live after the flesh, ye must die," Rom. viii. 13. God saith to you in this case, as to Ahab, when he spared Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 42. "Because thou hast let go a man whom God hath ap-"pointed to destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life." Guilt will raise a storm of wrath, as Jonah did, if not cast out.

REFLECTION.

And must sin or the soul perish? Must my life, yea, my eternal life go for it if I spare it? O then let me not be cruel to mine own soul in sparing my sin; O my soul, this foolish pity and cruel indulgence will be thy ruin: If I spare it, God hath said, "He will not "spare me," Deut. xxvi. 20. It is true the pains of mortification are sharp, but yet is easier than the pains of hell. To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye is hard; but to have my soul cut off eternally from God is harder. Is it as easy (O my soul!) to burn for them in hell, as to mortify them on earth? Surely, it is "profitable "for me, that one member perish, rather than that all be cast into "hell," Matt. v. 24. I see the merchant willing to part with rich wares if embarked with them in a storm: And those that have gangrened legs or arms, willingly stretch them out to be cut off to preserve life: And shall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my soul; Christ reckoned souls worth his blood: And is it not worth my self-denial? Lord, let me not warm a snake in my bosom, that will at last sting me to the heart.

THE POEM.

THY soul's the ship, its lading is its lusts,
God's judgments, stormy winds, and dangerous gusts;
Conscience the master; but the stubborn will
Goes *supra cargo*, and doth keep the bill:
Affections are the men. The winds do rise,
The storm increases: Conscience gives advice
To throw those lusts o'erboard, and so to ease
The vessel, which else cannot keep the seas.
The will opposes, and th' affections say,
The master's counsel they will not obey.
The case is dang'rous, that no man can doubt,
Who sees the storm within, and that without.
Lusts and affections cannot part; no, rather,
They are resolv'd to swim or sink together.
Conscience still strives, but they cannot abide
That it or reason should the case decide
Lust knows that reason, in like cases, still
Determines well: Then chuse ye whom ye will.
Shall make the devil judge? This case has been
Before him, and he judg'd that skin for skin,
And all men have, they'll part with for their life.
Then how unreasonable is this strife?
They that their sins do with their persons ship,
Do for their souls prepare a dreadful whip.

CHAP. XX.

Christ, with a word, can surging waves appease:
His voice a troubled soul can quickly ease.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the sea works, and is tempestuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appease it. When the Egyptians would by their hieroglyphics express an impossibility, they did it by the picture of a man treading upon the waves. It is storied of Canute, an ancient Danish king, that when a mighty storm of flattery arose upon him, he appeased it by shewing that he could not appease the sea: But one of his courtiers told him as he rode near the sea-side, 'That he 'was Lord of the sea as well as land.' 'Well, (said the king) we shall 'see that by and by;' and so went to the water-side, and with a loud voice cried, 'O ye seas and waves, come no further, touch not my feet.' But the sea came up notwithstanding that charge, and confuted the flattery. But now Jesus Christ hath command of them indeed: It is said of him, Mat. viii. 20. *That he rebuked them.* And Mark iv. 38. He quiets them with a word, *Peace, be still;* as one would hush a child, and it obeyed him.

APPLICATION.

Conscience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging tempestuous sea; so it works, so it roars; and it is not in the power of all creatures to hush or quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations are not known till felt. O when the arrows of the Almighty are shot into the spirit, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against the soul; when the venom of those arrows drink up the spirits, and those armies of terrors charge violently and successively upon it, as Job vi. 4. What creature then is able to stand before them! Even God's own dear children have felt such terrors as have *distracted them*, Psal. lxxxi. 15. Conscience is the seat of guilt: it is like a burning glass, so it contracts the beams of the threatnings, twists them together, and reflects them on the soul, until it smoke, scorch, and flame. If the wrath of the king be like the roaring of a lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath! which is *burning wrath*, Job xix. 11. *Tearing wrath*, Psal. l. 22. *Surprizing wrath*, Job xx. 23. And *abiding wrath*, Job iii. 36.

In this case no creature can relieve: all are physicians of no value; some under these terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thrust themselves out of the world into it to avoid these gnawings: Yet Jesus Christ can quickly calm these mystical waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, he is the physician, and no other. It is the sprinkling of his blood, which, like a cooling fomentation, allays those heats within: That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all others have practised upon the soul to no purpose; and the reason is, because he is a Person in whom God and

man, justice and mercy meet and kiss each other, Eph. ii. 14. And hence fetches in peace to the soul, Rom. v. 1.

REFLECTION.

Can none appease a troubled conscience but Christ? Then learn, O my soul, to understand, and daily more and more to savour that glorious name, even Jesus, that delivers not only from the wrath to come, but that which is felt here also. O, if the foretaste of hell be so intolerable, if a few drops, let fall on the conscience in this life be so scalding and insufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there shall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?

Here men have somewhat to abate those terrors, some hopes of mercy, at least a possibility: but there is none. O my soul! how art thou loaded with guilt! and what a *Magormissabib* wouldst thou be, should God rouse that sleepy lion in thy bosom! My condition is not at all the better because my conscience is quiet. Ah! the day is coming when it must awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not into Christ the sooner. O Lord, who knows the power of thy wrath? O let me not carry this guilt out of the world with me, to maintain those everlasting flames, let me give no sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood of sprinkling, which alone speaketh peace.

THE POEM.

AMONG the dreadful works of God, I find
No *metaphors* to paint a troubled mind.
I think on this, now that, and yet will neither
Come fully up, though all be put together.
'Tis like the raging sea that casts up mire,
Or like to Ætna, breathing smoke and fire;
Or like a roused lion, fierce and fell;
Or like those furies that do howl in hell.
O conscience! who can stand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?
Stone, gout, strappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to sense, is but a toy to this.
No pleasures, riches, honours, friends can tell
How to give ease: In this 'tis like to hell.
Call for the pleasant timbrel, lute, and harp;
Alas! the music howls, the pain's too sharp
For these to charm, divert, or lull asleep:
These cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.
Let all the promises before it stand,
And set a Barnabas at its right hand;
These in themselves no comfort can afford,
'Tis Christ, and none but Christ can speak the word.
And he no sooner speaks but all is still,
The storm is over, and the mind tranquil.

There goes a pow'r, with his majestic voice,
To hush the dreadful storm, and still its noise.
Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,
That can rebuke such tempests with a word?

CHAP. XXI.

Our food out of the sea God doth command;
Yet few therein take notice of his hand.

OBSERVATION.

THE providence of God in furnishing us with such plenty and variety of fish, is not slightly to be past over. We have not only several sorts of fish in our own seas, which are caught in their seasons; but from several parts, especially the western parts of England, many sail of ships are sent yearly to the American parts of the world; as Newfoundland, New-England, &c. Whence every year is brought home, not only enough to supply our own nation, but many thousand pounds worth also yearly returned from Spain, and other countries; by which trade many thousand families do subsist.

APPLICATION.

But now, what returns do we make to heaven for these mercies? O what notice is taken of the good hand of Providence, which thus supplies and feeds us with the blessings of the sea? I fear there are but few that own, or act in submission to it, and are careful to return, according to received benefit. Men do not consider, "That their "works are in the hand of God," Eccl. ix. 1. And even those that have the most immediate dependence upon Providence, as merchants and seamen, yet are very prone to undertake designs in the confidence of their own wisdom and industry; not looking higher for the blessing, Jam. iv. 13. They often "sacrifice to their own net, and burn "incense to their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and "their meat plenteous," Hab. i. 16. viz. They attribute what is due to God unto the creature: now this is a sin highly provoking to the Lord; for look in what degree the heart cleaves to the second cause, in the same degree it departs from the living God, Jer. x. 5.

And how do you think the blessed God will take it, to see himself thus debased, and the creature thus exalted into his place; to see you carry yourselves to the creature as to a God, and to the blessed God as to a creature. Surely, it is a great and common evil and such as will blast all, if not timely discovered and lamented. If we make flesh our arm, it is just with God to wither and dry up the arm. Do we not, my brethren, look upon second causes as if they had the main stroke in our business? And with a neglective eye pass by God, as if he came in but collaterally, and on the bye, into it?

But certainly all endeavours will be unsanctified, if not successless in which God is not eyed and engaged.

"It is in vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the "bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep," Psalm cxxxvii. 2. i e. It is to no purpose for men to beat their brains, tire their spirits, and rack their consciences for an estate. The true way of acquiring and enjoying the creature, is by submitting quietly to the will of God, in a prudent and diligent, yet moderate use of lawful means: Nothing can thrive with us till then.

REFLECTION.

Why then should I disquiet myself in vain; and rob myself of my peace, by these unbelieving cares and distractions? O this hath been my sin! I have acted, as if my condition had been at my own dispose; I have eyed creatures and means too much, and God too little. How have my hands hanged down with discouragement, when second causes have disappeared, or wrought cross to my designs in the world, ready to transfer the fault on this thing, or that! And again, how apt am I to be vainly lifted up in carnal confidence, when I see myself competently furnished with creature munition, and provision? Oh, what a God-provoking wickedness, is this! How oft hath providence checked my carnal presumption, and dashed many hopeful projects? Yet have I not owned it, as I ought, and submitted to it. Oh, it is a wonder this hath not closed the hand of providence against me, and pulled down a curse upon all! Ah Lord, let me now learn, "to acquaint myself with thee, then shall I decree a thing, and it "shall be established," Job xxii. 28.

THE POEM.

IN all the gifts of God we should advance
His glorious name; not say, it came by chance.
Or to the idol of our prudence pay
The tribute of our praise, and go our way.
The waves do clap their hands, and in their kind
Acknowledge God; and what! are they more blind
That float upon them? Yea, for what they get
They offer sacrifices to their net.
This is your manner, thus to work you go:
Confess the naked truth; is't not so?
This net was wisely cast, 'tis full, 'tis full:
O well done mates, this is a gallant pull.
Thus what is due to God, you do apply
Unto yourselves most sacrilegiously.
I cannot wonder such come empty home,
That are so full of self and sin: Yet some
I hope look higher, and on God reflect
Due praise. A blessing such may well expect.

CHAP. XXII.

Whilst thou by art the silly fish doth kill,
Perchance the devil's hook sticks in thy gill.

OBSERVATION.

THERE is skill in fishing; they that go to sea in a fishing voyage, use to go provided with their craft (as they very fitly call it) without which they can do nothing. They have their lines, hooks of several sizes, and their bait. They carefully observe their seasons; when the fish fall in, then they ply their business day and night.

APPLICATION.

But how much more skilful and industrious is Satan to ensnare and destroy souls? The devil makes a voyage as well as you; he hath his baits for you, as you have for the fish: He hath his devices and wiles to catch souls, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11. He is a serpent, an old serpent, Rev. xii. 9. Too crafty for man in his perfection, much more in his collapsed and degenerated state, his understanding being cracked by the fall, and all his faculties poisoned and perverted.

Divines observe four steps, or degrees of Satan's tempting power:

First, He can find out the constitution-evils of men; he knows to what sin their natures are more especially prone, and inclinable.

Secondly, He can propound suitable objects to those lusts, he can exactly and fully hit every man's humour: as Agrippa mixed her poison in that meat her husband loved best.

Thirdly, He can inject and cast motions into the mind, to close with those tempting objects; as it is said of Judas, John xiii. 2. "The devil put it into his heart."

Fourthly, He can solicit, irritate, and provoke the heart, and by those continual restless solicitations weary it: and hereby he often draws men to commit such things as startled them in the first motion

All this he can do, if he finds the work sticks, and meets with rubs and difficulties; yet doth he not act to the utmost of his skill and power, at all times, and with all persons; neither indeed need he do so; the very propounding of an object is enough to some, without any further solicitation; the devil makes an easy conquest of them.

And, beside all this, his policy much appears in the election of place, time, and instruments to tempt by: And thus are poor souls caught, "as fishes in an evil net," Eccl. ix. 12. The carnal man is led by sense, as the beast; and Satan handles and fits him accordingly. He useth all sorts of motives, not only internal and intellective; but external and sensitive also; as the sparkling of the wine, when it gives its colour in the glass; the harlot's beauty, whose eyelids are snares, hiding always the hook, and concealing the issue from them. He promises them gain and profit, pleasure and delight, and all that is tempting, with assurance of secresy: By these he fastens

the fatal hook in their jaws, and thus they are led captive by him at his will.

REFLECTION.

And is Satan so subtil and industrious to entice souls to sin? Doth he thus cast out his golden baits, and allure souls with pleasure to their ruin? Then how doth it behove thee, O my soul, to be jealous and wary! how strict a guard should I set upon every sense! Ah, let me not so much regard how sin comes towards me in the temptation, as how it goes off at last. The day in which Sodom was destroyed, began with a pleasant sun-shine, but ended in fire and brimstone. I may promise myself much content in the satisfaction of my lusts: But O how certainly will it end in my ruin? Ahab doubtless promised himself much content in the vineyard of Naboth, but his blood paid for it in the portion of Jezreel. The harlot's bed was perfumed, to entice the simple young man, Prov. vii. 17. But those chambers of delight proved the chambers of death, and her house the way to hell. Ah! with what a smiling face doth sin come on towards me in its temptations? how doth it tickle the carnal fancy, and please the deceived heart? But what a dreadful catastrophe and upshot hath it? The delight is quickly gone; but the guilt thereof remains to amaze and terrify the soul with ghastly forms, and dreadful representations of the wrath of God. As sin hath its delights attending it to enter and fasten it, so it hath its horrors and stings to torment and wound: And as certainly as I see those go before it to make a way, so certainly shall I find these follow after, and tread upon its heels. No sooner is the conscience awakened, but all those delights vanish as a night-vision, or as a dream when one awakes; and then I shall cry, here is the hook, but where is the bait? Here is the guilt and horror, but where the delight that I was promised? And I, whither shall I now go? Ah, my deceitful lusts! you have enticed and left me in the midst of all miseries.

THE POEM.

THERE's skill in fishing, that the devil knows;
For when for souls Satan a fishing goes,
He angles cunningly; he knows he must
Exactly fit the bait unto the lust.
He studies constitution, place and time,
He guesses what is his delight, what thine:
And so accordingly prepares the bait,
Whilst he himself lies closely hid, to wait
When thou wilt nibble at it. Dost incline
To drunken meetings? then he baits with wine:
Is this the way? If into this he'll smell,
He'll shortly pledge a cup of wrath in hell.
To pride or lust is thy vile nature bent?
An object suitable he will present.

O think on this! when you cast in the hook,
Say, Thus for my poor soul doth Satan look.
O play not with temptations, do not swallow
The sugar'd bait, consider what will follow.
If once he hitch thee, then away he draws
Thy captive soul close pris'ner in his paws.

CHAP. XXIII.

Doth trading fail, and voyages prove bad;
If you cannot discern the cause, 'tis sad.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are many sad complaints abroad (and, I think not without cause) that trade fails, nothing turns to account. And though all countries are open and free for traffic, a general peace with all nations, yet there seems to be a dearth, a secret curse upon trading. You run from country to country, and come losers home. Men can hardly render a reason of it; few hit the right cause of this judgment.

APPLICATION.

That prosperity and success in trade are from the blessing of God, I suppose few are so *atheistical*, as once to deny or question. The devil himself acknowledges it, Job i. 10. "Thou hast blessed the "work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." It is not in the power of any man to get riches, Deut. viii. 18. "Thou "shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee "power to get wealth." It is his blessing that makes good men rich, and his permission that makes wicked men rich. That maxim came from hell, *Quisque fortunæ suæ faber:* Every man is the contriver of his own condition. Certainly, "The good of man is not in his "own hand," Job xxi. 16. "Promotion cometh not from the east "nor the west," Psal. lxxvi. 6, 7.

This being acknowledged, it is evident that in all disappointments, and want of success in our callings, we ought not to stick in second causes, but to look higher, even to the hand and disposal of God: For whose it is to give the blessing, his also it is to with-hold it. And this is as clear in scripture as the other: It is the Lord that takes away the fishes of the sea, Hos. iv. 3. Zeph. i. 3. "It is he "that curseth our blessings," Mal. ii. 3.

This God doth as a punishment for sin, and the abuse of mercies; and therefore in such cases we ought not to rest in general complaints to, or of one another, but search what those sins are that provoke the Lord to inflict such judgments.

And here I must request your patience, to hear a plain, and close word of conviction. My brethren, I am persuaded these are the

sins among many others, that provoke the Lord to blast all your employments.

1. Our undertaking designs without prayer. Alas! how few of us begin with God! interest him in our dealings, and ask counsel and direction at his mouth. Prayer is that which sanctifies all employments and enjoyments, 1 Tim. iv. 5. The very *heathen* could say, *A Jove principium.* They must begin with God. O that we had more prayers, and fewer oaths!

2. Injustice and fraud in our dealings. A sin to which merchants are prone, as appears by that expression, Hos. xii. 7. This is that which will blast all your enjoyments.

3. An over-earnest endeavour after the world. Men make this their business, they will be rich: and hence it is, they are not only unmerciful to themselves, in wearying and wasting their own spirits with carking cares, but to such also as they employ; neither regarding the souls or bodies of men: scarce affording them the liberty of the Lord's day, (as has been too common in our Newfoundland employments,) or if they have it, yet they are so worn out with incessant labours, that that precious time is spent either in sleep or idleness. It is no wonder God gives you more rest than you would have, since that day of rest hath been no better improved. This over-doing hath not been the least cause of our undoing.

Lastly, Our abuse of prosperity, when God gave it, making God's mercies the food and fuel of our lusts. When we had affluence and confluence of outward blessings, "this made us kick against God," as, Deut. xxxiii. 15. "forget God," Deut. iv. 14. yea, grow proud of our strength and riches, Ezek. xvi. 13. and Jer. ii. 31. Ah! how few of us in the days of our prosperity, behaved ourselves as good Jehoshaphat did? 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. "He had silver and gold in a-"bundance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of God's com-"mandments;" not in pride and insolence.

REFLECTION.

Are these the sins that blast our blessings, and wither our mercies? O then let me cease to wonder it is no better, and rather admire that it is no worse with me; that my neglect of prayer, injustice in dealings, earthly-mindedness, and abuse of former mercies have not provoked God to strip me naked of all my enjoyments. Let me humbly accept from the Lord the punishment of my iniquities, and lay my hand upon my mouth. And O that these disappointments might convince me of the creature's vanity, and cause me to drive on another trade for heaven; then shall I adore thy wisdom in rending from me those idolized enjoyments. Ah, Lord! When I had them, my heart was a perpetual drudge to them: how did I then forget God, neglect my duty, and not mind my eternal concernments! Oh, if these had not perished, in all probability I had perished. My God, let my soul prosper, and then a small portion of these things shall afford me more comfort than ever I had in their greatest abundance.

" A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of " many wicked," Psal. xxxvii. 16.

THE POEM.

THERE's great complaint abroad that trading's bad,
You shake your head, and cry, 'Tis sad, 'tis sad.
Merchants lay out their stock, seamen their pains,
And in their eye they both may keep their gains.
Your fishing fails, you wonder why 'tis so,
'Tis this (saith one) or that; but I say—no,
'Twill ne'er be well till you confess and say,
It is our sin that frights the fish away.
No wonder all goes into bags with holes,
Since so the gospel hath been in your souls.
We kick'd like Jeshurun, when the flowing tide
Of wealth came tumbling in, this nourish'd pride.
'Twixt soul and body, now I wish it may
Fare, as betwixt the Jews and us this day
O that our outward want and loss may be
To us a soul-enriching poverty!
If disappointments here advance the trade
For heaven, then complain not; you have made
The richest voyage, and your empty ships
Return deep laden with soul-benefits.

CHAP. XXIV.

In seas the greater fish the less devour:
So some men crush all those within their power.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are fishes of prey in the sea, as well as birds and beasts of prey on the land. Our seamen tell us, how the devouring whales, sharks, dolphins, and other fishes, follow the caplein, and other smaller fish, and devour multitudes of them. It is frequent with us in our own seas to find several smaller fish in the bellies of the greater ones; yea, I have often heard seamen say, that the poor little fry, when pursued are so sensible of the danger, that they have sometimes seen multitudes of them cast themselves upon the shore and perish there to avoid the danger of being devoured by them.

APPLICATION.

Thus cruel, merciless, and oppressive are wicked men, whose "ten- " der mercies are cruelty," Prov. xxii. 10. We see the like cruelty in our extortioners, and over-reaching sharks ashore, who grind the faces of the poor, and regard not the cries of the fatherless and widows, but fill their houses with the gain of oppression. These are, by the Holy Ghost, compared to the fishes of the sea, Hab. i. 13, 14. This is a crying sin, yea, it sends up a loud cry to heaven for ven-

geance, Exod. xxii. 23. "If thou afflict the widow and the father-"less, and they cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry." And ver. 27. "I will hear his cry, for I am gracious. Nay, God will not only hear their cry, but avenge their quarrel. That is a remarkable text, 1 Thes. iv. 6. "That no man go beyond and defraud his bro-"ther in any matter, because that the Lord is the [avenger] of all "such." This word * *avenger*, is but once more used in the *New Testament*, Rom. xiii. 4. and there it is applied to the civil magistrate, who is to see execution done upon offenders. But now this is a sin that sometimes may be out of the reach of man's justice, and therefore God himself will be their avenger. You may over-power the poor in this world, and it may be they cannot contend with you at man's bar, therefore God will bring you before his bar.

Believe it, sirs, it is a sin so provoking to God, that he will not let it escape without severe punishment, sooner or later. The prophet Habakkuk, chap. i. ver. 13. wondered how the holy God could forbear such till the general day of reckoning, and that he did not take exemplary vengeance on them in this life. "Thou art of purer "eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity: where-"fore then lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and "holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is "more righteous than he?" And Prov. xxiii. 10, 11. "Enter not "into the fields of the fatherless," i. e. of the poor and helpless. But why is it more dangerous violently to invade their right, than another's? The reason is added, "for their Redeemer is mighty, "and he shall plead their cause with thee." It may be they are not able to retain a counsel to plead their cause here; therefore God will plead their cause for them.

REFLECTION.

Turn in upon thyself (O my soul) and consider, hast thou not been guilty of this crying sin! Have I not (when a servant) over-reached and defrauded others, and filled my master's house with violence and deceit? and so brought myself under that dreadful threatening, Zeph. i. 9. Or since I came to trade and deal upon mine own account, have not the balances of deceit been in my hand? I have (it may be) kept many in my service and employment; have not I used their labours without reward, and so am under that woe? Jer. xxii. 13. or not given them wages proportionable to their work? Isa. lviii. 3. or by bad payment and unjust deductions and allowances, defrauded them of a part of their due? Mal. iii. 5. or at least delayed payment, out of a covetous disposition to gain by it; whilst their necessities in the mean time cried aloud for it; and so sinned against God's express commands, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Lev. xix. 30. or have I not persecuted such as God hath smitten? Psal. lxix. 26. and rigorously exacted the utmost of my due, though the hand of God hath gone out

* Εκδικος.

against them, breaking their estates? O my soul, examine thyself upon these particulars: rest not quiet until this guilt be removed by the application of the blood of sprinkling. Hath not the Lord said, Jam. ii. 13. "That they shall have judgment without mercy, that "have shewed no mercy? And is it not a fearful thing to fall into "the hands of the living God, who hath said, He will take ven-"geance for these things?"

THE POEM.

DEVOURING whales, and rav'nous sharks do follow
The lesser fry, at one gulp to swallow
Some hundreds of them, as our seamen say:
But we can tell far stranger things than they.
For we have sharks ashore on every creek,
That to devour poor men do hunt and seek.
No pity, sense, or bowels in them be,
Nay, have they not put off humanity?
Extortioners and cheaters, whom God hates
Have dreadful open mouths, and through those gates
Brave persons with their heritages pass
In fun'ral state, friends crying out, alas!
O give me Agur's wish, that I may never
Be such myself, nor feel the hands of either.
And as for those that in their paw's are grip'd,
Pity and rescue, Lord, from that sad plight.
When I behold the squeaking lark, that's borne
In faulcon's talons, crying, bleeding, torn;
I pity its sad case, and would relieve
The prisoner, if I could, as well as grieve.
Fountain of pity! hear the piteous moans
Of all thy captive and oppressed ones.

CHAP. XXV.

In storms to spread much sail endangers all:
So carnal mirth, if God for mourning call.

OBSERVATION.

IN storms at sea, the wise navigator will not spread much sail; that is the way to lose masts and all. They use then to furl up the sails, and lie a hull, when not able to bear a knot of sail, or else to lie a try, or scud before the wind and seas. It is no time then to hoist up the top and top-gallant, and shew their bravery.

APPLICATION.

When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth, Ezek. xxi. 10. "Should we [then] make mirth?

It contemneth the rod of my son as every tree." i. e. As if it were a common rod and ordinary affliction: whereas the rod of my son is not such as may be had of every tree; but it is an iron rod to such as despise it, Psal. ii. 9. O it is a provoking evil, and commonly God severely punishes it. Of all persons such speed worst in the common calamity. Amos vi. 1. "Woe to them that are at ease in Sion, that 'are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," as ver. 6. It may be (as one observes upon the text) they did not laugh at him, or break jests upon him; but they did not condole with him. And what shall be their punishment? see ver. 7. "Therefore now shall they go cap-"tive with the first that go captive:" God will begin with them first. Solomon tells us, Eccles. iii. 4. "There is a time to weep, and a "time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance:" 'Only, (as 'M. Trap notes upon the text) we must not invert the order, but 'weep with men, that we may laugh with angels.' To be merry and frolic in a day of tribulation, is to disturb the order of seasons. That is a terrible text, Isa. xxii. 12. which should make the hearts of such as are guilty in this kind to tremble: "In that day did the Lord of "hosts call to mourning, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold "joy and gladness, slaying oxen, killing sheep, drinking wine," &c. Well, what is the issue of this? "Surely, this iniquity shall not be "purged from you till ye die." O dreadful word! surely (my brethren) sympathy is a debt we owe to Christ mystical. Whatever our constitution, condition, or personal immunities be, yet when God calls for mourning, we must hear and obey that call. David was a king, an expert musician, a man of a sanguine and cheerful constitution: yet who more sensible of the evil of those times than he? Rivers of water ran down his eyes at the consideration of them. Melancthon was so affected with the miseries of the church in his days, that he seemed to take little or no notice of the death of his child, whom he entirely loved. At such a time we may "say of laughter, thou art "mad, and of mirth, what doth it!"

REFLECTION.

Blush then, O my soul! for thy levity and insensibility under God's angry dispensations. How many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion, lie in tears abroad, while I have been "nourishing "my heart as in a day of slaughter? The voice of God hath cried "to the city, and men of understanding have heard its voice," Micah vi. 9. But I have been deaf to that cry. How loth (my God) have I been to urge my sensual heart to acts of sorrow and mourning! Thou hast bid me weep with them that weep, but my vain heart cannot comply with such commands. Ah, Lord! If I mourn not with Zion, neither shall I rejoice with her.

O, were mine eyes opened, and my heart sensible and tender, I might see cause enough to melt into tears! and like that Christian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. to lie weeping at the feet of Christ. Lord, what stupidity is this! shall I laugh, when thou art angry, and thy

children weeping and trembling? Then I may justly fear, lest "when they shall sing for joy of heart, I shall howl for vexation of "spirit," Isa. lxv. 13, 14. Surely, O my soul! such laughter will be turned into mourning; either here or hereafter.

THE POEM.

IN troublous times, mirth in the sinner's face
Is like a mourning-cloak with silver lace.
The lion's roaring make the beasts to quake:
God's roaring judgments cannot make us shake.
What belluine contempt is this of God,
To laugh in's face when he takes up the rod?
Such laughter God in tears will surely drown,
(Unless he hate thee) e'er he lay it down.
These rods have voices, if thou hear them well;
If not, another rod's prepar'd in hell;
And when the arm of God shall lay it on,
Laugh if thou canst; no, then thy mirth is gone.
All Zion's children will lament and cry,
When all her beauteous stones in dust do lie?
And he that for her then laments and mourns,
Shall want no joy, when God to her returns.

CHAP. XXVI.

A little leak neglected, dangerous proves:
One sin connived at, the soul undoes.

OBSERVATION.

THE smallest leak, if not timely discovered and stopt, is enough to sink a ship of the greatest burden: Therefore seamen are wont frequently to try what water is in the hold; and if they find it fresh, and increasing upon them, they ply the pump, and presently set the carpenters to search for it and stop it; and till it be found they cannot be quiet.

APPLICATION.

What such a leak is to a ship, that is the smallest sin neglected to the soul; it is enough to ruin it eternally. For as the greatest sin discovered, lamented, and mourned over by a believer, cannot ruin him; so the least sin indulged, covered, and connived at, will certainly prove the destruction of the sinner. No sin, though never so small, is tolerated by the pure and perfect law of God, Psalm cxix. 96. The *command is exceeding broad;* not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they please, but *broad*, i. e. extending itself to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections: Laying a law upon them all; conniving at no evil in any man, 1 Pet. ii. 1.

And as the word gives no allowance for the least sin, so it is the

very nature of sincerity and uprightness, to set the heart against [*every*] way of wickedness, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. Job xxxi. 13. and especially against that sin which was its darling in the days of his vanity, Psal. xviii. 23. True hatred (as the philosopher observes) is of the * whole kind: He that hates sin as sin, and so doth every upright soul, hates all sins as well as some.

Again, the soul that hath had a saving sight of Jesus Christ, and a true discovery of the evil of sin, in the glass both of the law and gospel, can account no sin small. He knows the demerit of the smallest sin is God's eternal wrath, and that not the least sin can be remitted without the shedding and application of the blood of Christ, Heb. ix. 22. which blood is of infinite value and price, 1 Pet. i. 19.

To conclude, God's people know, that little as well as great sins, are dangerous, deadly, and destructive in their own nature; a little poison will destroy a man. Adrian was choaked with a gnat, Cæsar stabbed with bodkins. A man would think Adam's sin had been no great matter, yet what dreadful work did it make! It was not as a single bullet to kill himself only; but as a chain-shot, which cut off all his poor, miserable posterity. Indeed, no sin can be little, because its object against whom it is committed is so great, whence it receives a kind of infiniteness in itself; and because the price paid to redeem us from it is so invaluable.

REFLECTION.

And is the smallest sin not only damning in its own nature, but will certainly prove the ruin of that soul that hides and covers it; O then let my spirit accomplish a diligent search. Look to it, O my soul! that no sin be indulged by thee; set these considerations as so many flaming swords in the way of thy carnal delights and lusts: Let me never say of any sin as Lot did of Zoar, "It is a little one, spare "it." Shall I spare that which cost the blood of Jesus Christ? The Lord would not spare him, "When he made his soul an offering for sin," Rom. viii. 32. Neither will he spare me, if I defend and hide it, Deut. xxix. 20. Ah! if my heart were right, and my conversation sound, that lust, whatever it be, that is so favoured by me, would especially be abhorred and hated, Isa. ii. 20. and xxx. 22. Whatever my convictions and reformations have been, yet if there be but one sin retained and delighted in, this keeps the devil's interest in my soul. And though for a time he seem to depart, yet at last he will return with seven worse spirits, and this is the sin that will open the door to him, and deliver up my soul, Matth. xii. 43, 44. Lord, let me make thorough work of it; let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right-hand, or eye. Ah! shall I come so near the kingdom of God, and make such a fair offer for Christ, and yet stick at a small matter, and

* Εις το γενος.

lose all for want of one thing? Lord, let me shed the blood of the dearest lust for his sake that shed his dearest blood for me!

THE POEM.

THERE's many a soul's eternally undone
For sparing sin, because a little one.
But we are much deceiv'd; no sin is small,
That wounds so great a God, so dear a soul.
Yet say it were, the smallest pen-knife may
As well as sword or lance, dispatch and slay,
And shall so small a matter part and sever
Christ and thy soul? What! make you part for ever?
Or wilt thou stand on toys with him, when he
Deny'd himself in greatest things for thee?
Or will it be an ease in hell to think
How easily thy soul therein did sink?
Are Christ and hell for trifles sold and bought?
Strike souls with trembling, Lord, at such a thought!
By little sins belov'd, the soul is lost,
Unless such sins do great repentance cost.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get:
With such a wind the saints have ever met.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH in most parts of the world the winds are variable, and sometimes blow from every part of the compass, by reason whereof sailing is slow and dangerous; yet about the Equinoctial, seamen meet with a trade-wind blowing, for the most part one way; and there they sail jocund before it, and scarce need to lower a topsail for some hundreds of leagues.

APPLICATION.

Although the people of God meet with many seeming rubs and set-backs in their way to heaven, which are like contrary winds to a ship; yet they are from the day of their conversion to the day of their complete salvation, never out of a trade-wind's way to heaven. Rom. viii. 21. "We know that all things work together for good to "them that love God, to them that are called according to his pur-"pose." This is a most precious scripture, pregnant with its consolation, to all believers in all conditions, a pillar of comfort to all distressed saints: Let us look a little nearer to it.

(We know) Mark the certainty and evidence of the proposition, which is not built upon a guess or remote probability, but upon the knowledge of the saints; *we know it*, and that partly by Divine re-

velation, God has told us so; and partly by our own experience we find it so.

(That all things) Not only things that lie in a natural and direct tendency to our good; as *ordinances, promises, blessings, &c.* but even such things as have no natural fitness and tendency to such an end; as *afflictions, temptations, corruptions, desertions, &c.* all these help onward. They

(Work together) Not all of them directly, and of their own nature and inclination; but by being over-ruled and determined to such an issue by the gracious hand of God: nor yet do they work out such goods to the saints singly and apart, but as adjuvant causes or helps, standing under, and working in subordination to the supreme and principal cause of their happiness.

Now, the most seeming opposite things, yea, sin in itself, which in its own nature is really opposite to their good, yet eventually contributes to it. Afflictions and desertions seem to work against us, but being once put into the rank and order of causes, they work together with such blessed instruments, as word and prayer to an happy issue. And though the faces of these things that so agree and work together, look contrary ways; yet there are, as it were, secret chains and connexions of providence betwixt them, to unite them in their issue. There may be many instruments employed about one work, and yet not communicate counsels, or hold intelligence with each other. Joseph's brethren, the Midianites, Potiphar, &c. knew not one another's mind, nor aimed at one end, (much less the end that God brought about by them) one acts out of revenge, another for gain, a third out of policy; yet all meet together at last, in that issue God had designed to bring about by them, even Joseph's advancement. Even so it is here, Christian, there are more instruments at work for thine eternal good than thou art aware of.

REFLECTION.

Cheer up then, O my soul, and lean upon this pillar of comfort in all distresses. Here is a promise for me, if I am a called one; that, like the philosopher's stone, turns all into gold it toucheth. This promise is my security; however things go in the world, my God "will do me no hurt," Jer. xxv. 6. Nay, he will do me good by every dispensation. "O that I had but an heart to make all things "work for his glory, that thus causeth every thing to work for my "good." My God, dost thou turn every thing to my advantage? O let me return all to thy praise; and if by every thing thou work my eternal good, then let me in every thing give thanks.

But ah! how foolish and ignorant have I been? even as a beast before thee. How hath my heart been disquieted, and apt to repine at thy dispensations, when they have crossed my will? not considering that my God faithfully pursues my good, even in those things that cross, as well as in that which pleases me.

Blessed Lord! What a blessed condition are all thy people in, who

are within the line of this promise? All things friendly and beneficial to them; friends helpful; enemies helpful; every thing conspiring, and conducing to their happiness. With others it is not so; nothing works for their good; nay, every thing works against it: their very mercies are snares, and their prosperity destroys them; Prov. i. 32. even the blessed gospel itself is a savour of death to them: when evil befals them, "it is an only evil," Ezek. vii. 5. that is, not turned into good to them; and as their evils are not turned into good, so all their good is turned into evil. As this promise hath an influence into all that concerns the people of God, so the curse hath an influence into all the enjoyments of the wicked. O my soul, bless the Lord, who hath cast thy lot into such a pleasant place, and given thee such a glorious heritage, as this promise is.

THE POEM.

WHEN once the dog-star rises, many say,
Corn ripens then apace, both night and day.
Souls once in Christ, that morning-star lets fall
Such influences on them, that all
God's dispensations to them, sweet or sour,
Ripen their souls for glory ev'ry hour.
All their afflictions, rightly understood,
Are blessings; ev'ry wind will blow some good.
Sure at their troubles saints would never grudge,
Were sense deposed, and faith made the judge.
Falls make them warier, amend their pace;
When gifts puff up their hearts, and weaken grace.
Could Satan see the issue, and th' event
Of his temptations, he would scarcely tempt.
Could saints but see what fruits their troubles bring,
Amidst those troubles they would shout and sing.
O sacred wisdom! who can but admire
To see how thou dost save from fire, by fire!
No doubt but saints in glory wond'ring stand
At those strange methods few now understand.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Storms make discovery of the pilot's skill:
God's wisdom in affliction triumphs still.

OBSERVATION.

IN fair weather, when there is sea-room enough, then every common person can guide the ship; the pilot may then lie down and take his rest; but in great storms and stress of weather, or when near the dangerous shore, then the most skilful pilot is put to it; then he

shews the utmost of his art and skill, and yet sometimes all is too little. They are (as the scripture speaks) *at their wit's end*, know not what to do more; but are forced to commit all to the mercy of God and the seas.

APPLICATION.

In the storms and tempests of affliction and trouble, there are the most evident and full discoveries of the wisdom and power of our God: it is indeed continually active for his people in all conditions, Isa. xxvii. 3. "Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Psal. cxxi. 4. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor "sleepeth." His people's dangers are without intermission, therefore his preservations are so too. But now, when they come into the *strait* of affliction and deadly dangers, which threatens like rocks on every side; now the wisdom of their God rides triumphantly and visibly upon the waves of that stormy sea: and this infinite wisdom is then especially discovered in these particulars.

1. In leaving them still somewhat in the lieu and room of those comforts that they are deprived of; so that they see God doth exchange their comforts, and that for the better; and this supports them. So John xiv. 1, 2, 3. Christ's bodily presence is removed, but the Spirit was sent in the room of it, which was better.

2. In doubling their strength, as he doubles their burdens. It is observed that the saints have many times very strong and sweet consolation, a little before their greatest trials: and this is so ordinary, that commonly when they have had their extraordinary consolations from God, they have then looked for some eminent trial. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and sealed the covenant to him, and then put him upon that great trial of his faith. So the disciples, Luke xxiv. 49. it was commanded them that they should "tarry in "Jerusalem till they were endowed with power from on high." The Lord knew what a hard providence they were like to have, and what great oppositions and difficulties they must encounter in publishing the everlasting gospel to the world; and therefore first prepares and endows them with power from on high, viz. with eminent measures of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; as faith, patience, self-denial, &c. So Paul had first his revelations, then his buffetings.

3. In coming in so opportunely in the time of their great distress, with relief and comfort, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "Then the Spirit of glory "and of God resteth on them." As that martyr cried out to his friend Austin, at the very stake, *He is come, he is come.*

4. In appointing and ordering the several kinds of afflictions to several saints; and allotting to every one that very affliction, and no other, which is most suitable to his condition: which afflictions, like so many potions of physic, are prepared for that very malignant humour that predominates most in them. Peter's sin was self-confidence, God permits him to fall by denying Christ; which doubtless

was sanctified to his good in that particular. Hezekiah's sin was vain-glory, therefore spoilers are sent to take away his treasures.

5. In the duration of their troubles, they shall not lie always upon them, Ps. cxxv. 3. Our God is a God of judgment, Is. xxx. 18. Knows the due time of removing it, and is therein punctual to a day, Rev. ii. 10.

REFLECTION.

If the wisdom of God do thus triumph, and glorify itself in the distresses of the saints, then why should I fear in the day of evil? Psal. xlix. 4. Why doth my heart faint at the foresight and apprehension of approaching trouble? Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer, O my soul: if thy God will thus be with thee in the fire and water, thou canst not perish. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet let me fear no evil, whilst my God is thus with me. Creatures cannot do what they please, his wisdom limits and over-rules them all to gracious and sweet ends. If my God cast me into the furnace to melt and try me, yet I shall not be consumed there; for he will sit by the furnace himself all the while I am in it, and curiously pry into it, observing when it hath done its work, and then will presently withdraw the fire. O my soul, bless and adore this God of wisdom! who himself will see the ordering of all thine afflictions, and not trust it in the hands of men or angels.

THE POEM.

THOUGH tost in greatest storms, I'll never fear,
If Christ will sit at th' helm to guide and steer;
Storms are the triumph of his skill and art;
He cannot close his eyes, nor change his heart.
Wisdom and power ride upon the waves,
And in the greatest danger helps and saves.
From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,
And wounds the devil out of his own quiver;
It countermines his plots, and so doth spoil,
And makes his engines on himself recoil.
It blunts the politician's restless tool,
And makes Ahithophel the veriest fool;
It shews us how our reason us misled,
And if he had not we had perished.
Lord, to thy wisdom I will give the reins,
And not with cares perplex and vex my brains.

CHAP. XXIX.

Things in the bottom are unseen: no eye
Can trace God's paths, which in the deeps do lie.

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is so deep, that no eye can discover what lies in the bottom thereof. We use to say, proverbially, of a thing that is

irrecoverably lost, it is as good it were cast into the sea. What lies there lies obscure from all eyes but the eyes of God.

APPLICATION.

Thus are the judgments of God and the ways of his providence profound and unsearchable, Psal. xxxvi. 6. "Thy righteousness is like "the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep;" i. e. his providences are secret, obscure, and unfathomable; but even then, and in those providences, his righteousness stands up like the great mountains, visible and apparent to every eye. Though the saints cannot see the one, yet they can clearly discern the other, Jer. xii. 1. Jeremiah was at a stand; so was Job in the like case, Job xii. 7. So was Asaph, Psal. lxxiii. and Habakkuk, chap. i. 3. These wheels of providence are dreadful for their height, Ezek. i. 18. There be deep mysteries of providence, as well as of faith. It may be said of some of them, as of Paul's epistles, That they *are hard to be understood*; darkness and clouds are round about the throne of God: no man can say what will be the particular issue and event of some of his dispensations. Luther seemed to hear God say to him, when he was importunate to know his mind in some particular providence, *Deus sum, non sequax:* I am a God not to be traced. Sometimes providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backward, Psal. xcii. 7. Some providences pose men of the greatest parts and graces. "His way is in the "sea, his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known," Psal. lxxvii. 19. Who can trace footsteps in the bottom of the sea? "The angels," Ezek. i. "have their hands under their wings." The hand is either, *symbolum roboris*, The symbol of strength, or *instrumentum operationis*, The instrument of action: where these hands are put forth, they work effectually, but very secretly; they are hid under their wings. There be some of God's works that are such secrets, as that they may not be enquired into; they are to be believed and adored, but not pryed into, Rom. xi. 33. Others that may be enquired after, but yet are so profound, that few can understand them, Psal. cxi. 2. "The works of the Lord are great, sought "out of all those that have pleasure therein." When we come to heaven, then all those mysteries, as well in the works as in the word of God, will lie open to our view.

REFLECTION.

O then, why is my heart disquieted, because it cannot sometimes discern the way of the Lord, and see the connection and dependence of his providential dispensations? Why art thou so perplexed, O my soul, at the confusions and disorders that are in the world! I know that goodness and wisdom sits at the stern: and though the vessel of the church be tossed and distressed in times of trouble, yet it shall not perish. Is it not enough for me that God hath condescended so far for my satisfaction, as to shew me plainly the ultimate and general issue of all these mysterious providences, Eph. i. 22. Rom. viii. 28. unless I be able to take the height of every particular, shall I presume

to call the God of heaven to account? Must he render a reason of his ways, and give an account of his matters to such a worm as I am? Be silent (O my soul) before the Lord, subscribe to his wisdom, and submit to his will whatsoever he doth. However it be, yet God is good to Israel; the event will manifest it to be all over a design of love. I know not how to reconcile them to each other, or many of them to the promise; yet are they all harmonious betwixt themselves, and the certain means of accomplishing the promises. O what a favour is this, that in the midst of the greatest confusions in the world, God hath given such abundant security to his people, that it shall be well with them; Amos ix. 8. Eccles. viii. 12.

THE POEM.

LORD! how stupendous. deep, and wonderful
Are all thy draughts of providence! So full
Of puzzling intricacies, that they lie
Beyond the ken of any mortal eye.
A wheel within a wheel's the scripture notion,
And all those wheels transverse, and cross in motion,
All creatures serve it in their place; yet so,
As thousands of them know not what they do.
At this or that their aim they do direct;
But neither this nor that is the effect:
But something else they do not understand,
Which sets all politicians at a stand.
Deep counsels at the birth this hand doth break,
And deeper things performeth by the weak.
Men are, like horses, set at ev'ry stage,
For providence to ride from age to age;
Which, like a post, spurs on, and makes them run
From stage to stage, until their journey's done;
Then take a fresh; but they they the bus'ness know
No more than horses the post-letters do.
Yet tho' its works be not conceal'd from sight,
'Twill be a glorious piece when brought to light.

CHAP. XXX.

Millions of men are sunk into the main;
But it shall not those dead always retain.

OBSERVATION.

WHAT multitudes of men hath the sea devoured! thousands have made their graves in it. What numbers of men have been ingulphed together in sea-fights, or storms, or inundations, whereby whole towns have been swallowed up! certainly the dead which are there, are innumerable.

APPLICATION.

But though the sea has received so many thousand bodies of men into its devouring throat, yet it is not the absolute lord or proprietor of them, but rather a steward intrusted with them, till the Lord require an account of them; and then it must deliver up all it hath received, even to a person. Rev. xx. 11, 12. "And I saw the dead, "small and great, stand before God: And the books were opened; "and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the "dead were judged out of those things which were written in the "book according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead "which were in it."

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is a doctrine full of singular consolations to believers, 1 Cor. xv. and most clearly asserted in scripture, Acts xxvi. 8. Job xix. 25. 1 Cor. xv. &c. And it is well for us this point is so plainly revealed; because as it is a most comfortable truth to the people of God, so there is scarce any truth that lies under more prejudice, as to sense or reason, and is more difficult to receive than this is. The Epicures and Stoics laughed Paul to scorn when he preached it to them, Acts xvii. 32. The Familists and Quakers at this day reject it as a fable. The Socinians say the same body shall not rise, but an aerial body. And, indeed, if men set up reason as the only judge of supernatural things, it is incredible to think, that a body should be restored that hath been burnt to ashes, and those ashes scattered in the wind; as history tells us was frequently done by the bodies of the saints in Dioclesian's reign! or when drowned in the sea, and there devoured by several fishes, and those again devoured by others. But yet this is not to be objected to the almighty power of God, that gave them their first being: difficulties and impossibilities are for men, but not for him. "Why should it be "thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the "dead?" Acts xxvi. 8.

REFLECTION.

And must I rise again where-ever my body falls at death? Then, Lord, how am I concerned to get union with Christ whilst I live? By virtue thereof only my resurrection can be made comfortable and blessed to me. Ah! let my body lie where it will, in earth or sea: let my bones be scattered, and flesh devoured by worms or fish, I know thou canst, and wilt re-unite my scattered parts; and in this body I must stand before thine awful tribunal, to receive according to what I have done therein, 2 Cor. v. 10. Thou that commandest me to stand forth amongst the noblest rank of creatures, when I had no being, and sawest my substance, being yet imperfect, canst as easily reduce me to that being again.

What though reason vote it impossible, and sense incredible? Though all these difficulties and incumbrances grow upon my faith, yet I know my body is not lost for ever; the sound of thy last and dreadful

trumpet, shall awaken me; and thy mighty power, to which all things are possible, shall bring me before thy bar.

O Lord, I know that I shall stand in that great assembly at the last day, when multitudes, multitudes, even all the sons and daughters of Adam, shall appear together. O if I die christless, it were good for me that there were no resurrection; for then those eyes that have been windows of lust, must behold Christ the Judge, not as a Redeemer, but as a Revenger. That tongue that hath vented so much of the filthiness of my heart, will then be struck speechless before him; and this flesh which I so pampered and provided for, condemned to everlasting flames. O my God let me make sure work for such a day! if I now get real union with thy Son, I shall awake with singing out of the dust; and then, as thou saidst to Jacob, so to me, when I go down into the sea, or grave, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. "Fear not to go "down into the deep; for I will surely bring thee up again."

THE POEM.

IT should not seem incredible to thee,
That God should raise the dead in seas that be:
We see in winter, swallows, worms, and flies
Depriv'd of life, yet in the spring they rise.
What tho' your bodies sev'ral fish devour,
Object not that to the Almighty pow'r.
Some chymists in their art are so exact,
That from one herb they usually extract
Four diff'rent elements; what think ye then
Can pose that God who gave this skill to men?
The gard'ner can distinguish thirty kinds
Of seeds from one another, tho' he finds
Them mix'd together in the self-same dish;
Much more can God distinguish flesh from fish.
They seem as lost, but they again must live;
The sea's a steward, and stewards account must give.
Look what you are, when in the ocean drown'd,
The very same at judgment you'll be found.
I would not care where my vile body lies,
Were I assur'd it should with comfort rise.

CHAP. XXXI.

The seaman's greatest danger's near the coast;
When we are nearest heav'n, the danger's most.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH seamen meet with violent storms, yet if they have sea-room enough, they are not much dismayed: but if they find themselves near the shore, they look upon their condition as very

dangerous: the sight of the shore is to them (as Solomon speaks of the morning in another case) like the shadow of death, if not able to weather it. For one ship swallowed up in the ocean, many perish upon the coast.

APPLICATION.

The greatest straits and difficulties that many saints meet with in all their lives, is when they come nearest to heaven, and have almost finished their course. Heaven indeed is a glorious place, the spacious and royal mansion of the Great King; but *difficilia quæ pulchra;* it hath a strait and narrow entrance, Luke xiii. 24. O the difficulty of arriving there! how many hard tugs in duty, what earnest contention and striving even to an agony! as that word imports, Luke xiii. 24. Multitudes put forth, and by profession are bound for this *fair haven:* but of the multitudes that put out, how few do arrive there? A man may set out by a glorious profession with much resolution, and continue long therein; he may offer very fair for it, and not be far from the kingdom of God, and yet not be able to enter at the last, Matth. vii. 22.

Yea, and many of those who are sincere in their profession, and do arrive at last, yet come to heaven (as I may say) by the gates of hell; and put in, as a poor weather-beaten vessel comes into the harbour, more like a wreck than a ship, neither mast nor sail left. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, i. e. they are saved with very much difficulty. They have not all an *abundant entrance*, as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 11.

'Some persons (as * one well notes) are *afar off*, Eph. ii. 23. i. e. 'touched with no care of religion: some come near, but never enter 'as semi-converts. See Matth. xii. 34. Others enter, but with great 'difficulty, they are saved as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Make an hard 'shift. But then there are some that go in with full sail before the 'wind, and have an abundant entrance; they go triumphing out of 'the world." Ah! when we come into the narrow channel, at the very point of entrance into life, the soul is then in the most serious frame: all things look with a new face; conscience scans our evidence most critically; then, also, Satan falls upon us, and makes his sorest assaults and batteries. It is the last encounter; if they escape him now, they are gone out of his reach for ever: and if he cannot hinder their salvation, yet if he can but cloud their evening, and make them go groaning and howling out of the world, he reaches another end by it, even to confirm and prejudice the wicked, and weaken the hands of others that are looking towards religion.

REFLECTION.

If this be so, how inevitable is my perdition, may the careless soul say? If they that strive so much, and go so far, yet perish at last; and if the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, then where shall such

* Manton on Jude, p. 119.

an ungodly creature as I appear? O Lord! if they that have made religion their business, and have been many years pursuing a work of mortification, have gone mourning after the Lord Jesus, and walked humbly with God; yet if some of these have such an hard tug at last, then what will become of such a vain, sensual, careless, flesh-pleasing wretch as I have been?

Again, Do saints find it so strait an entrance? Then, though I have well grounded hopes of safe arrival at last; yet let me look to it, that I do not increase the difficulty. Ah! they are the things that are now done, or omitted, that put conscience into such an agony then; for then it comes to review the life with the most serious eye. O let me not stick my death-bed full of thorns, against I come to lie down upon it. O that I may turn to the wall in that hour, as Hezekiah did, 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. and say, "Remember "now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with "a perfect heart," &c.

THE POEM.

AFTER a tedious passage, saints descry
The glorious shore, salvation being nigh:
Death's long-boat's launch'd, ready to set ashore
Their panting souls. O how they tug at oar,
Longing to be at rest! but then they find
The hardest tug of all is yet behind.
Just at the harbour's mouth they see the wreck
Of souls there cast away, and driven back.
A world of dang'rous rocks before it lie;
The harbour's barr'd, and now the winds blow high;
Thoughts now arise, fears multiply apace;
All things above them have another face.
Life blazes, just like an expiring light,
The soul's upon the lip prepar'd for flight.
Death, till the resurrection, tears and rends,
Out of each other's arms two parting friends,
The soul and body. Ah! but more than so,
The devil falls upon them ere they go,
With new temptations, back'd with all his pow'r,
And scruples kept on purpose for that hour.
This is the last encounter, now, or never;
If he succeedeth now, they're gone for ever.
Thus in they put, with hardship at the last,
As ships out of a storm, nor sail, nor mast:
Yet some go in before a wind, and have
Their streamer of assurance, flying brave.
Lord, give me easier entrance, if thou please;
Or if I may not there arrive with ease,
Yet I beseech thee, set me safe ashore,
Tho' stormy winds at harbour's mouth should roar.

CHAP. XXXIII.

How glad are seamen when they make the shore?
And saints, no less, when all their danger's o'er.

OBSERVATION.

WHAT joy is there among seamen, when at last, after a tedious and dangerous voyage, they descry land, and see the desired haven before them? Then they turn out of their loathed cabins, and come upon open deck with much joy. Psal. cvii. 30. "Then "they are glad, because they be quiet: So he bringeth them to "their desired haven." Now they can reflect with comfort upon the many dangers they have past, *Olim hæc meminisse juvabit;* it is sweet to recount them.

APPLICATION.

But O what a transcendent joy, yea, ravishing, will over-run the hearts of saints, when, after so many conflicts, temptations, and afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harboured in heaven, where they shall rest for ever! 2 Thess. i. 7. The scripture saith, "They shall "sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb," Rev. xv. 3. The song of Moses was a triumphant song composed for the celebration of that glorious deliverance at the red sea. The saints are now fluctuating upon a troublesome and tempestuous sea; their hearts sometimes ready to sink, and die within them, at the apprehension of so many and great dangers and difficulties. Many a hard storm they ride out, and many straits and troubles they here encounter with, but at last they arrive at their desired and long-expected haven, and then heaven rings and resounds with their joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwise, when as soon as ever they set foot upon that glorious shore, Christ himself meets and receives them with a "Come "ye blessed of my Father," Matth. xxv. 34. O joyful voice! O much desired word! saith Paræus, what tribulation would not a man undergo for this word's sake!

Besides, then they are perfectly freed from all evils, whether of sin or suffering, and perfectly filled with all desired good. Now they shall join with that great assembly, in the high praises of God. O what a day will this be! If (said a * worthy divine) Diagoras died away with an excess of joy, whilst he embraced his three sons that were crowned as victors in the Olympic games in one day: and good old Simeon, when he saw Christ but in a body subject to the infirmities of our nature, cried out, "Now let thy servant depart in "peace;" what unspeakable joy will it be to the saints, to behold Christ in his glory, and see their godly relations also (to whose conversion, perhaps, they have been instrumental) all crowned, in one day, with everlasting diadems of bliss! and if the stars did, as Ig-

* Morning Exercise, p. 651.

natius saith, make a choir, as it were, about that star that appeared at Christ's incarnation, and there is such joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner; no wonder then, the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy, when the general assembly meet in heaven. O how will the arches of heaven ring and echo, when the high praises of God shall be in the mouth of such a congregation! then shall the saints be joyful in glory, and sing aloud upon their beds of everlasting rest.

REFLECTION.

And is there such a day approaching for the sons of God, indeed! and have I [*authority*] to call myself one of the number! John i. 12. O then let me not droop at present difficulties, nor hang down my hands when I meet with hardships in the way. O my soul, what a joyful day will this be! for at present we are tossed upon an ocean of troubles, fears, and temptations; but these will make heaven the sweeter.

Cheer up, then, O my soul, thy salvation is now nearer than when thou first believedst, Rom. xiii. 11. and it will not now be long ere I receive the end of my faith, 1 Pet. i. 9. and then it will be sweet to reflect even upon these hardships in the way. Yet a few days more, and then comes that blessed day thou hast so long waited and panted for. Oppose the glory of that day, O my soul, to thy present abasures and sufferings, as blessed Paul did, Rom. i. 18. and thou shalt see how it will shrink them all up to nothing; oppose the inheritance thou shalt receive in that day, to thy losses for Christ now; and see how joyfully it will make thee bear them, Heb. x. 34. oppose the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy present reproaches, and see how easy it will make them to thee, 1 Cor. iv. 5. What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this blessed day cannot relieve me?

Am I poor, here is that which answers poverty: James iii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of "this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?"

Am I tempted? here is relief against that: Rev. xii. 16. "Now "is come salvation and strength; for the accuser of our brethren is "cast down," *&c.*

Am I deserted? here is a remedy for that too, Rev. xxii. 5. "And "there shall be no night there," *&c.* Come, then, my soul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.

THE POEM.

WHEN Solomon in Israel first was king,
Heaven's arches, earth's foundations, seem'd to ring
With joyful acclamations! How much more
Will heav'n resound, when saints are come ashore!

How will the ravish'd souls transported be
At the first glimpse of Christ! whom they shall see
In all his glory; and shall live and move,
Like salamanders, in the fire of love.
A flood of tears convey'd them to the gate
Where endless joys receiv'd them. Now the date
Of all their sorrow's out; henceforth they walk
In robes of glory. Now there's no more talk
Of fears, temptations, of that snare or this:
No serpent in that paradise doth hiss.
No more desertions, troubled thoughts, or tears;
Christ's full enjoyment supersedes those fears.
Delights of princes courts are all but toys
To these delights, these are transcendent joys,
The joys of Christ himself; of what they are,
An angel's tongue would stammer to declare.
Were our conceptions clear, did their tongues go
Unto their *Ela*, yet the note's too low.
What! paint the sun too bright! it cannot be;
Sure heaven suffers no hyperbole.
My thoughts are swallow'd up, my muse doth tire,
And hang her wings, conception soars no higher.
Give me a place among thy children there,
Altho' I lie with them in dungeon here.

A concluding Speech.

I HAVE now done, and am looking to heaven for a blessing upon these weak labours; what use you will make of them, I know not, but this I know, that the day is coming, when God will reckon with you for this, and all other helps and means afforded to you: and if it be not improved by you, be sure it will be produced as a witness against you. Sirs, I beg you, in the name of Christ, before whom both you and I must shortly appear, that you receive not these things in vain. Did I know what other lawful means to use that might reach your hearts, they should not be in vain to you; but I cannot do God's part of the work, nor yours: only I request you all, both masters, common men, and all others into whose hands this shall come, that you will lay to heart what you read; pray unto him that hath the key of the house of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, to open your hearts to give entertainment to these truths. Alas! if you apply it not to yourselves, I have laboured to no purpose; the pen of the scribe is in vain: but God may make such an application of them, in one storm or another, as may make your hearts to tremble. Oh, sirs! when death and eternity look you in the face, conscience may reflect upon these things to your horror and amazement, and make you cry out, as Prov. v. 12, 13. "How have I hated knowledge, and my heart despised reproof

" and have not obeyed the voice of my teacher, nor inclined my ears " to them that instructed me?" And O what a dreadful shriek will such souls give, when the Lord opens their eyes to see that misery that they are here warned of! But if the Lord shall bless these things to your conversion, then we may say to you, as Moses did to Zebulun, the mariners tribe, Deut. xxxiii. 12. " Rejoice Zebulun in thy " going out." The Lord will be with you, which way soever you turn yourselves; and being in the bosom of the covenant, you are safe in the midst of all dangers. O thou, that art the Father of spirits, that formedst and canst easily reform the heart, open thou the blind eye, unstop the deaf ear, let the world take hold upon the heart. If thou wilt but say the word, these weak labours shall prosper, to bring home many lost souls unto thee. *Amen.*

A PATHETICAL AND SERIOUS

DISSUASIVE

FROM THE

Horrid and detestable SINS of Drunkenness, Swearing, Uncleanness, Forgetfulness of Mercies, Violation of Promises, and atheistical Contempt of Death.

Applied by way of CAUTION to SEAMEN, and now added as an APPENDIX to their NEW COMPASS.

Being an ESSAY toward their much-desired Reformation, fit to be seriously recommended to their profane Relations, whether Seamen or others, by all such as unfeignedly desire their eternal Welfare.

To the right worshipful Sir JOHN FREDERICK, Kt. one of the worshipful Aldermen of the City of London, and their honourable BURGESS in the present Parliament: and to the truly religious and ever honoured Mr. JOHN LOVERING, of the City of London, Merchant.

Much honoured and esteemed,

ALTHOUGH dedications are too often abused to a vain flattery, yet there is an excellent use and advantage to be made of them: partly to encourage persons of worth and eminency to espouse the interest of religion themselves; and partly to oblige those readers, for whom such books are principally intended, to a diligent perusal of them, by interesting such persons in them, for whom they have great respects, or on whom they have any dependence.

Upon the first account, a dedication would be needless to you: for I am persuaded, you do not only in your judgment approve the design I here manage, *viz.* The reformation of the profane and looser sort of our seamen; but are also heartily willing to improve your interest to the uttermost for the promotion of it. I cannot look upon you as persons acted by that low and common spirit that the most of your profession are acted by, who little regard, if they be good servants to them, whether God have any servce from them or not; and if they pay them the wages due for their work, never think of the wages they are to receive for their sin. You are judged to be persons of another spirit, who do not only mind, but advance Christ's interest above your own, and negotiate for his glory, as well as for your own gain: and yet herein you consult your own interest as well as God's: *Subordinata non pugnant.* Your interest is never more prosperously managed, or abundantly secured, than when it is carried on in a due subordination to God's. Their reformation will apparently tend to your advantage. Those sins of theirs, against which I have here engaged, are the Jonahs in your ships; it is sin that sinks them, and drives them against the rocks. "One sinner "destroyeth much good," Eccl. viii. 11. How much more a lewd crew of them conspiring to provoke God! the death of their lusts, is the more probable means to give life to your trade. And as these counsels prosper in their hearts, so will your business thrive in your hands. Piety and prosperity are married together in that promise, Psal. i. 3. Onesimus was never so profitable a servant to Philemon, as when he became his brother in a *spiritual*, as well as his servant in a *civil* capacity, Phil. ver. 11. and 16. compared. And yet if your interest were forced to step back, to give way to Christ's, I hope you would (notwithstanding) rejoice therein. So that my present business is, not so much to persuade you, whose hearts I hope, God hath already persuaded to so good a work; as to make your fame and respects, which are great among them, an innocent bait to tempt them to their duty. And if either your names or interest may be useful to such an end, I presume I may use them freely, and welcome; for, sure I am, they can never be put to a better use.

Well then, I will make bold to send this small adventure in your ships; and if the return of it be but the conversion of one soul to God, I shall reckon that I have made a better voyage than you, let your returns be never so rich.

How these things will affect them I know not. I do suppose it will produce different effects upon them, according to the different tempers of their spirits, and according as God shall command or suspend the blessing. Possibly some will storm at the close and cutting rebukes of the word, (for most men's lusts are a great deal more sensible and tender than their consciences) and will fondly imagine that this necessary plainness tends to their reproach. But if none but the

guilty can be supposed to be angry at them, they will thereby reproach themselves a great deal more than ever I intended to do.

I confess it is a bitter pill and compounded of many operative and strong ingredients, which do acute it; but not a jot more than is necessary. I shall beg the assistance of your prayers to God for them, and of your grave admonitions and exhortations to them for God; which will much help its operation, and facilitate my design, to do their souls a piece of everlasting service; with which design I can truly say, I even travail in pain for them. Your assistance therefore in this good work, will put the highest obligation upon

Your most affectionate

Friend and Servant,

to be commanded,

JOHN FLAVEL.

A

SOBER CONSIDERATION

OF THE SIN OF

DRUNKENNESS.

IN the former treatise I have endeavoured to spiritualize earthly objects, and elevate your thoughts to more sublime and excellent contemplations; that earthly things may rather be a step, than a stop to heavenly. You have therein my best advice to guide you in your course to that port of your eternal rest and happiness.

In this I have given warning of some dangerous rocks and quicksands that lie upon your left hand; upon which millions of souls have perished, and others are wilfully running to their own perdition. Such are the horrid sins of *drunkenness*, *uncleanness*, *profane swearing*, *violation of promises*, *engagements made to God*, *and atheistical slighting and contempt of death and eternity*. All which I have here given warning of, and held forth a light to discover where your danger is. If after this you obstinately prosecute your lusts, and will not be reclaimed; you perish without apology, I have freed mine own soul.

Let none interpret this necessary plainness as a reproach to seamen, as if I represented them to the world worse than they are. If, upon that account, any of them be offended, methinks these three or four considerations should remove that offence.

First, That if this close and plain dealing be necessary, in order to your cure, and you will be offended thereat, it is better you should be offended than God. Ministers are often put upon lamentable straits, they sail betwixt Scylla and Charybdis; the wrath of God

upon one side, if we do not speak plain and home, as the necessity of the case requires; and man's wrath if we do: what shall we do in this strait? Either God or you, it seems, must be offended; and if it cannot be avoided, I shall rather hazard your anger than God's, and think it far more tolerable.

Secondly, If you did but see the necessity and end of this manner of dealing with your souls, you would not be offended. But put it into a more sensible case, and you will see and acknowledge it presently. If I should see an high-built wall giving way, and ready to fall upon you, would you be angry with me, if by plucking you out of the danger, I should pluck your arm out of joint; certainly you would not. Why, this is the case here: See Isa. xxx. 13. "Therefore this "iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a "high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant."

Thirdly, What a madness is it to abide in a condition over which all woes and curses hang, and yet not be able to endure to hear of it! Why, what will it profit you to have your misery hid from your eyes, and kept from your ears a little while? You must see this wrath, and hear louder vollies of woes from your own consciences, if you remain in this condition. You cannot bear that from us, which your conscience will one of these days preach themselves to you, and that in a more dreadful dialect than I have used here.

Fourthly, I do not charge these sins indifferently upon all seamen. No, I know there are some choice and good men amongst your men, that fear an oath, and hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, who are (I question not) the credit and glory of our English nation, in the eyes of strangers that converse with them. Nor yet do I think that all that are wicked amongst them are equally guilty of all these evils; for though all that are graceless be equally under the dominion of original corruption, yet it follows not from thence, that therefore actual sins must reign alike in them: there is a great difference, even among ungodly men themselves in this respect; which difference ariseth from their various customs, constitutions, abilities, educations, and the different administrations of the Spirit, in enlightening, convincing, and putting checks upon conscience: for though God be not the author, yet he is the orderer of sin. And this makes a great disparity, even among wicked men themselves. Some are persons of good morals, though not gracious principles, which produce a civil and sober, though not a holy and religious life. And others, though they live in some one of these lusts, yet are not guilty of some others of them. For it is with original corruption, just as it is with the sap of the earth, which though it be the matter of all kind of fruits, yet in some ground it sorts better with one grain than with another: and so in plants, in one tree it becomes an apple, in another a cherry; even so it is with this original corruption, in one man it runs most into swearing, in another into uncleanness, in a third into drunkenness. Lust is nothing else but the corrupt appetite of the creature

to some sinful object; and therefore look as it is with the appetite with respect to food, so it is with the vitiated appetites of souls to sin. One man loves this food best, and another that; there is endless variety in that, and so in this.

Having spoken thus much to remove offence, I shall now beg you to peruse the following discourse. Consider what evidence these things carry with them. Search the alleged scriptures, see if they be truly recited and applied to the case in hand: And if so, O tremble at the truth you read! bring forth your lusts, that they may die the death. Will you not part with these abominable practices till death and hell make the separation? Ah! how much better is it for you that grace should do it? And because many of you see not the danger, and therefore prize not the remedy, I do here request all those that have the bowels of pity in them, for their poor relations, who are sinking, drowning, perishing, to spread these following cautions before the Lord for a blessing, and then put them into their hands. And O that all pious masters would persuade all those that are under their charge to buy this ensuing treatise, and diligently peruse it. And the first caution I shall give them is this:

CAUTION I.

TAKE heed, and beware of the detestable sin of drunkenness, which is a beastly sin, a voluntary madness, a sin that unmans thee, and makes thee like the beasts that perish; yea, sets thee below the beasts, which will not drink to excess; or, if they do, yet it is not their sin. * One of the ancients calls it, 'A distemper of the 'head, a subversion of the senses, a tempest in the tongue, a storm 'of the body, the shipwreck of virtue, the loss of time, a wilful 'madness, a pleasant devil, a sugared poison, a sweet sin, which he 'that has, has not himself, and he that commits it, doth not only 'commit sin, but he himself is altogether sin.' It is a sin at which the most sober heathens blushed. The Spartans brought their children to loath it, by shewing them a drunkard, whom they gazed at as a monster: Even Epicurus himself, who esteemed happiness to consist in pleasure, yet was temperate, as Cicero observes. Among the heathens he was accounted the best man, that spent more oil in the lamp, than wine in the bottle. Christianity could once glory in its professors: Tertullian saith of the primitive Christians, they sat not down before they prayed; they eat no more than might suffice hunger, they drank no more than was sufficient for temperate men; they did so eat and drink, as those that remembered they must pray afterward. But now we may blush to behold such beastly sensualists adorning themselves with its name, and sheltering themselves under its wings.

* *Turbatio capitis, subversio sensus, tempestas linguæ, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amissio temporis, insania voluntaria, blandus dæmon, dulce venenum, suave peccatum, quam qui habet, seipsum non habet; quam qui fecit, peccatum non fecit, sed ipse totus est peccatum.* Aug. ad. lacr. Virginis.

And amongst those that profess Christianity, how ordinarily is this sin committed by seamen? This insatiable dropsy is a disease that reigns, especially among the inferior and ruder sort of them. Some of them have gone aboard drunk, and laid the foundation of their voyage in sin. O what a preparation is this! They know not whether ever they shall see the land of their nativity any more: the next storm may send them into eternity: Yet this is the farewell they take, this is their preparation to meet the Lord. And so in their returns, notwithstanding the terrible and astonishing works of the Lord, which they have beheld with their eyes, and their marvellous preservation in so great and terrible extremities; yet thus do they requite the Lord, as soon as their dangers are over, as if they had been delivered to commit all these abominations. But a few hours or days since, they were reeling to and fro upon a stormy ocean, and staggering like drunken men, as it is said, Psal. cvii. 27. and now you may see them reeling and staggering in the streets, drowning the sense of all those precious mercies and deliverances in their drunken cups.

Reader, if thou be one that is guilty of this sin, for the Lord's sake bethink thyself speedily, and weigh, with the reason of a man, what I shall now say, in order to thy conviction, humiliation, and reformation. I need not spend many words, to open the nature of this sin to you; we all grant, that there is a lawful use of wine and strong drink to support nature, not to clog it; to cure infirmities, not to cause them. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, "for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmity," saith Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23. Mark, drink not water, but wine; *Sed modice*, (i. e.) *medice: pro remedio, non pro deliciis*, saith Ambrose *; that is, use it modestly, viz. medicinally, not for pleasure, but for remedy. Yea, God allows it, not only for bare necessity, but for cheerfulness and alacrity, that the body may be more fit and more expedite for duty, Prov. xxxi. 7. but further no man proceeds, without the violation of sobriety. When men sit till wine have inflamed them, and reason be disturbed, (for drunkenness is the privation of reason, caused by immoderate drinking,) then do they come under the guilt of this horrid and abominable sin. To the satisfaction and refreshment of nature, you may drink; for it is a part of the curse to drink, and not be satisfied; but take heed and go no further; "For "wine is a [mocker,] strong drink is raging, and whosoever is de- "ceived thereby, is not wise," Prov. xx. 1. The throat is a slippery place; how easily may a sin slip through it into the soul? These sensual pleasures have a kind of inchanting power upon the soul, and by custom gain upon it, till they have enslaved it, and brought it under their power. Now, this is the sin against which God hath delivered so many precepts, and denounced so many woes, in his

* *Qui dedit aquam, dedit vinum.*

word. Eph. v. 18. "Be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess." Rom. xiii. 13. "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering "and wantonness," Isa. v. 11. "Woe to them that rise up early in "the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue "until night, till wine inflame them:" with many other of dreadful importance. Now, to startle thee for ever from this abominable and filthy lust, I shall here propound to thy consideration these ten ensuing arguments; and oh that they might stand in the way, as the angel did in Balaam's, when thou art in the prosecution of thy sensual pleasures! And the first is this:

Argument 1. It should exceedingly dissuade from this sin, to consider that it is an high abuse of the bounty and goodness of God in affording us those sweet refreshments, to make our lives comfortable to us upon earth. In Adam we forfeited all right to all earthly as well as heavenly mercies: God might have taken thee from the womb, when thou wast a sinner but of a span long, and immediately have sent thee to thine own place; thou hadst no right to a drop of water more than what the bounty of God gave thee: And whereas he might have thrust thee out of the world as soon as thou camest into it, and so all those days of mercy thou hast had on earth might have been spent in howling and unspeakable misery in hell: Behold the bounty and goodness of God to thee; I say, behold it, and wonder: He hath suffered thee for so many years to live upon the earth, which he hath prepared and furnished with all things fit for thy necessity and delight: Out of the earth, on which thou treadest, "he "bringeth forth thy food, and [wine] to make glad thy heart," Psal. civ. 14, 15. And dost thou thus requite the Lord? Hath mercy armed an enemy to fight against it with its own weapons? Ah! that ever the riches of his goodness, bounty, and long-suffering, all which are arguments to lead thee to repentance, should be thus abused! If God had not been so bountiful, thou couldst not have been so sinful.

Arg. 2. It degrades a man from the honour of his creation, and equalizeth him to the beast that perisheth: Wine is said to take away the heart, Hos. iv. 11. i. e. the wisdom and ingenuity of a man, and so brutifies him, as Nebuchadnezzar, who lost the heart of a man, and had the heart of a beast given him, Dan. iv. 32. The heart of a man hath its generosity and sprightliness, brave, vigorous spirits in it, capable of, and fitted for noble and worthy actions and employments; but his lust effeminates, quenches, and drowns that masculine vigour in the puddle of excess and sensuality: For no sooner is a man brought under the dominion of this lust, but the government of reason is renounced, which should exercise a coercive power over the affections, and all is delivered up into the hands of lust and appetite: and so they act not by discretion and reason, but by lust and will, as the beasts do by instinct. The spirit of man entertains itself with intellectual and chaste delights; the soul of a

beast is only fitted for such low, sensitive, and dreggy pleasures. Thou hast something of the *angel*, and something of the *beast* in thee; thy soul partakes of the nature of angels, thy body of the nature of beasts. Oh! how many pamper the *beast* while they starve the *angel?* God, in the first chapter, put all the creatures in subjection to thee; by this lust thou puttest thyself in subjection to the creature, and art brought under its power, 1 Cor. vi. 12. If God had given thee the head or feet of a beast, oh! what a misery wouldst thou have esteemed it? and is it nothing to have the heart of a beast? Oh! consider it sadly.

Arg. 3. It is a sin by which thou greatly wrongest and abusest thine own body. The body is the soul's instrument; it is as the tools are to a skilful artificer; this lust both dulls and spoils it, so that it is utterly unfit for any service of him that made it. Thy body is a curious piece, not made by a word of command, as other creatures, but by a word of counsel; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and "curiously wrought," saith the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxix. 14. or as the vulgar, *Acupictus sum*, Painted as with needle-work of divers colours, like a garment richly embroidered. Look how many members, so many wonders! There are miracles enough, saith one, betwixt head and foot to fill a volume. There is, saith another, such curious workmanship in the eye, that upon the first sight of it, some Atheists have been forced to acknowledge a God; especially that fifth muscle in the eye is wonderful, whereby, (as a learned * author observes) man differeth from all other creatures, who have but four; one to turn the eye downward, a second to hold it forward, a third to move it to the right-hand, a fourth to the left; but none to turn it upward as a man hath. Now, judge in thyself; Did God frame such a curious piece, and enliven it with a soul, which is a spark, a ray of his own light, whose motions are so quick, various, and indefatigable, whose flights of reason are so transcendent; did God, thinkest thou, send down this curious peace, the top and glory of the creation, the *index* and *epitome* of the whole world, Eccl. xii. 2. did God, I say, send down this picture of his own perfection, to be but as a strainer for meats and drinks, a spunge to suck in wine and beer? Or canst thou answer for the abuse and destruction of it? By this excess thou fillest it with innumerable diseases, under which it languisheth; and at last thy life, like a lamp, is extinguished, being drowned with too much oil. † 'Infinite diseases are begotten by it, (saith Zanchius); hence comes apoplexies, gouts, palsies, sudden death, trembling of the hands and legs;' herein they bring Cain's curse upon themselves, saith Ambrose: Drunkenness slays more than a sword. Oh! what a terrible thing will it be to consider upon a death-bed, that these pangs

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* *Columb. de re Anat.*

† *Infinitæ morborum genera inde nascuntur apoplexæ, paralyses, arthrides,* &c. *Ille optimus medicus sibi, qui modicus cibi.* Aug.

and aches are the fruits of thy intemperance and excess! "Who hath "woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath "babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness "of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek "mixed wine," Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. By this *enumeration* and manner of *interrogation*, he seems to make it a difficult thing to recount the miseries that drunkenness loads the outward man with; for look as vermin abound where there is store of corn, so do diseases in the bodies of drunkards, where crudities do so abound. Now, methinks, if thou hast no regard to thy poor soul, or the glory of God, yet such a sensible argument as this, from thy body, should move thee.

Arg. 4. Drunkenness wastes and scatters thine estate, poverty attends excess; the drunkard shall be clothed with rags, and brought to a morsel of bread. Solomon hath read thy fortune, Prov. xxi. 17. "He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich;" luxury and beggary are seldom far asunder. When Diogenes heard a drunkard's house cried to be sold; 'I thought (quoth he) it would not be long 'e'er he vomited up his house also.' The Hebrew word ירש and the Greek word ασωτια, which signifies luxury; the former is compounded of two words, which signify, *Thou shalt be poor;* and the latter signifies the losing of the possession of that good which is in our hand. "The drunkard and the glutton shall surely come to "poverty," Prov. xxiii. 21. In the Hebrew it is, he shall be disinherited or dispossessed. It doth not only dispossess a man of his reason, which is a rich and fair inheritance given to him by God, but it also dispossesses him of his estate: It wastes all that either the provident care of thy progenitors, or the blessing of God upon thine own industry, hath obtained for thee. And how will this sting like an adder, when thou shalt consider it? Apicus the Roman, hearing that there were seven hundred crowns only remaining of a fair estate that his father had left him, fell into a deep melancholy, and fearing want, hanged himself, saith Seneca. And not to mention the miseries and sorrows they bring hereby upon their families, drinking the tears, yea, the blood of their wives and children: Oh! what an account will they give to God, when the reckoning day comes! Believe it, sirs, there is not a shilling of your estates, but God will reckon with you for the expence thereof. If you have spent it upon your lusts, whilst the necessity of your families, or the poor, called upon you for it; I should be loth to have your account to make, for a thousand times more than ever you possessed. O woful expence, that is followed with such dreadful reckonings!

Arg. 5. Consider what vile and ignominious characters the Spirit of God hath put upon the subjects of this sin. The scripture every where notes them for infamous, and most abominable persons. When Eli supposed Hannah to be drunken, "Count not thine hand-"maid a daughter of Belial," said she, 1 Sam. i. 16. Now, a son or daughter of Belial is, in scripture-language, the vilest of men

or women. So Psal. lxix. 12. " They that sit in the gate, speak " against me, and I am the song of drunkards," i. e. of the basest and vilest of men, as the opposition plainly shews; for they are opposed to them that sit in the gate, that is honourable persons. The Lord would have his people shun the society of such as a pest, not to eat with them, 1 Cor. v. 11. Yea, the scripture brands them with atheism; they are such as have lost the sense and expectation of the day of judgment; mind not another world, nor do they look for the coming of the Lord, Mat. xxiv. 27, 28. He saith the Lord delayeth his coming, and then falls a drinking with the drunkard. The thoughts of that day will make them leave their cups, or their cups will drown the thoughts of such a day. And will not all the contempt, shame and infamy which the Spirit of God hath poured on the head of this sin cause thee to abhor it? Do not all godly, yea, moral persons, abhor the drunkard? Oh! methinks the shame that attends it, should be as a fence to keep thee from it.

Arg. 6. Sadly consider, there can be nothing of the sanctifying Spirit in a soul that is under the dominion of this lust; for upon the first discovery of the grace of God, the soul renounces the government of sensuality: " The grace of God that bringeth salvation, " teacheth men to live soberly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. That is one of its first effects. Drunkenness indeed may be found among heathens, that are lost in the darkness of ignorance; but it may not be once named among the children of the day. " They that be drunken, " are drunken in the night; but let us that are of the day, be sober," 1 Thess. v. 7, 8. And the apostles often oppose wine and the Spirit as things incompatible, Eph. v. 18. " Be not drunk with wine, " wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." So Jude 19. " Sensual, not having the Spirit." Now what a dreadful consideration is this? " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none " of his," Rom. viii. 9. Sensual persons have not the Spirit of Christ, and so can be none of his. It is true, Noah, a godly man, once fell into this sin; but, as Theodoret saith, and that truly, it proceeded *ab inexperientia, non ab intemperantia*, from want of experience of the force and power of the grape, not from intemperance; and, besides, we find not that ever he was again overtaken with that sin; but thou knowest it, and yet persistest, O wretched creature! the Spirit of Christ cannot dwell in thee. The Lord help thee to lay it to heart sadly!

Arg. 7. It is a sin over which many direful woes and threats hang in the word, like so many low'ring clouds, ready to pour down vengeance upon the heads of such sinners. Look, as the condition of the saints is compassed round with promises, so is yours with threatenings, Isa. v. 11. " Woe to them that rise up early in the morning, " that they may follow strong drink, and continue until night, un- " til wine inflame them." So Isa. xxviii. 1, 2. " Woe to the crown " of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim," &c. with many others,

too long to be enumerated here. Now, consider what a fearful thing it is to be under these woes of God! Sinner, I beseech thee, do not make light of them, for they will fall heavy; assure thyself not one of them shall fall to the ground; they will all take place upon thee, except thou repent.

There are woes of men, and woes of God: God's woes are true woes, and make their condition woful, to purpose, on whom they fall. Other woes, as one saith, do but touch the skin, but these strike the soul; other woes are but temporal, these are eternal; others do only part betwixt us and our outward comforts, these betwixt God and us for ever.

Arg. 8. Drunkenness is a leading sin, which has a great retinue and attendance of other sins waiting on it; it is like a sudden land-flood, which brings a great deal of dirt with it. So that look as faith excels among the graces, because it enlivens, actuates, and gives strength to them, so is this amongst sins. It is not so much a special sin against a single precept of God, as a general violation of the whole law, saith accurate Amesius. It doth not only call off the guard, but warms and quickens all other lusts, and so exposes the soul to be prostituted by them. (1.) It gives occasion, yea, is the real cause of many contentions, and fatal quarrels, Prov. xxiii. 29. "Who hath "woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath [contentions,] babbling, "wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine," *&c.* Contentions and wounds are the ordinary effects of drunken meetings: When reason is deposed, and lust heated, what will not men attempt? (2.) Scoffs and reproaches of the ways and people of God, Psal. lxix. 12. "David was the song of the drunkards." (3.) It is the great incendiary of lust: You shall find rioting and drunkenness joined with chambering and wantonness, Rom. xiii. 13. *Nunquam ego ebrium castum putabo*, saith Hierom; I will never think a drunkard to be chaste. Solomon plainly tells us what the issue will be, Prov. xxiii. 33. "Thine eyes shall behold a strange woman, and "thy heart shall utter perverse things," speaking of the drunkard. It may be called *Gad*, for a troop followeth it. Hence one aptly calls it, *The devil's bridle*, by which he turneth the sinner which way he pleases; he that is overcome by it, can overcome no other sin.

Arg. 9. But if none of the former considerations can prevail, I hope these two last may, unless all sense and tenderness be lost. Consider, therefore, in the 9th place, that drunkards are in scripture marked out for hell; the characters of death are upon them. You shall find them pinioned with other sons of death, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom "of God? Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor "adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, "nor thieves, nor covetous, nor [drunkards,] nor revilers, nor ex-"tortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Oh dreadful thunder-bolt! He is not *asleep* but *dead*, that is not startled at it.

Lord, how are guilty sinners able to face such a text as this is! Oh soul! darest thou for a superfluous cup, adventure to drink a cup of pure unmixed wrath? O think when the wine sparkles in the glass, and gives its colour, think, I say, what a cup of trembling is in the hand of the Lord for thee. Thou wilt not now believe this. Oh! but the day is coming, when thou shalt know the price of these brutish pleasures. Oh! it will then sting like an addder. Ah! this short-lived beastly pleasure is the price for which thou sellest heaven, and rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand.

Obj. *But I hope I shall repent, and then this text can be no bar to my salvation.*

Sol. True; if God shall give thee repentance, it could not. But, in the last place, to awaken thee thoroughly, and startle thy secure conscience, which sensuality hath brawned and cauterized, let me tell thee,

Arg. 10. That it is a sin out of whose power few, or none are ever rescued and reclaimed. On this account it was that St. Augustine called it the *pit of hell.* He that is addicted to this sin becomes incurable, saith a * reverend divine; for seldom or never have I known a drunkard reclaimed. And its power to hold the soul in subjection to it, lies in two things especially: (1.) As it becomes habitual; and habits are not easily broken. Be pleased to view an example in the case, Prov. xxiii. 35. "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was "not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I "awake? I will seek it yet again." (2.) As it "takes away the "heart," Hos. iv. 11. that is, the understanding, reason, and ingenuity of a man, and so makes him incapable of being reclaimed by counsel. Upon this account it was that Abigail would not speak less or more to Nabal, until the wine was gone out of him, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37. Plainly intimating, that no wholesome counsel can get in until the wine be gone out. When one asked Cleostratus, whether he were not ashamed to be drunken, he tartly replied, 'And are not 'you ashamed to admonish a drunkard?' Intimating that no wise man would cast away an admonition upon such an one. And it not only renders them incapable of counsel for the time, but by degrees it besots and infatuates them; which is a very grievous stroke from God upon them, making way to their eternal ruin. So then you see upon the whole what a dangerous gulph the sin of drunkenness is. I beg you, for the Lord's sake, and by all the regard you have to your souls, bodies, and estates, beware of it. O consider these ten arguments I have here produced against it. I should have proceeded to answer the several pleas and excuses you have for it; but I mind brevity, and shall shut up this first caution with a very pertinent and ingenious poem of Mr. George Herbert, in his TEMPLE.

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* Ames. de Consc. *p.* 139.

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
May'st rule it as thou list: and pour the shame
Which it will pour to thee upon the floor.
It is most just to throw that on the ground,
Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill,
Lie with his sister: he hath lost the reins;
Is outlaw'd by himself; all kind of ill
Did with the liquor slide into the veins.
The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
All worldly right, save what he has by beast.

Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung mind,
Lose all my own? God has given me a measure
Short of his Can, and body; must I find
A pain in that wherein he finds a pleasure?
Stay at the third glass; if thou lose thy hold,
Then thou art modest, but the wine grows bold,

If reason move not gallants quit the room,
(All in a shipwreck shift their several way.)
Let not a common ruin thee intomb:
Be not a beast in courtesies; but stay,
Stay at the third glass, or forego the place:
Wine, above all things, doth God's stamp deface.

CAUTION II.

THE second evil I shall deal with is the evil of the tongue, which as St. James saith, is full of deadly poison, oaths, curses, blasphemies; and this poison it scatters up and down the world in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, Jam. iii. 7, 8. The fiercest of beasts have been tamed by man, as the apostle there observes, which is a relic of his old superiority and dominion over them; but this is an unruly member that none can tame but he that made it; no beast so fierce and crabbed as this is. It may be, I may be bitten by it for my labour and endeavours to put a restraint upon it: but I shall adventure it. My design is not to dishonour, or exasperate you; but if my faithfulness to God and you should accidentally do so, I cannot help that.

Friends, Providence oftentimes confines many of you together within the narrow limits of a ship, where you have time enough, and if your hearts were sanctified, many choice advantages of edifying one another. O what transcendent subjects doth Providence daily present you with, to take up your discourses! How many experiences of extraordinary mercies and preservations have you to relate to one another, and bless the Lord for! Also, how many works of wonder

do you daily behold, who go down into the deeps? O what heavenly employment is here for your tongues! how should they be talking of all his wonders? How should you call upon each other, as David did, Psal. lxvi. 16. "Come hither, and I will tell you what God "hath done for my soul," at such a time, in such an extremity? How should you call upon one another to pay "the vows your lips "have uttered in your distress?" Thus should one provoke another in this angelic work, as one lively bird sets the whole flock a chirping.

But tell me, Sirs, should a man come aboard you at sea, and ask of you as Christ did of those two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communication is this that ye have by the "way?" O what a sad account would he have from most of you! It may be he should find one *jesting*, and another *swearing*, a third *reviling* godliness, and the professors of it; so that it would be a little hell for a serious Christian to be confined to your society. This is not, I am confident, the manner of all. We have a company of more sober seamen, and blessed be God for them; but surely thus stands the case with most of you. O what stuff is here from persons professing Christianity, and bordering close upon the confines of eternity as you do?

It is not my purpose to write of all the diseases of the tongue; that would fill a volume, and is inconsistent with my intended brevity. Who can recount the evils of the tongue? The apostle saith, "It is "a world of iniquity," Jam. iii. 6. And if there be a world of sin in one member, who can number the sins of all the members? Laurentius reckons as many sins of the tongue as there are letters in the alphabet. And it is an observable note that one hath upon Rom. iii. 13, 14. That when Paul anatomizeth the natural man there, he insisteth longer upon the organs of speech, than all the other members; "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they "have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips, their "mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

But, to be short, we find the Spirit of God in scripture comparing the tongue to a tree, Prov. xv. 4. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of "life." And words are the fruit of the tree, Isa. lvii. 12. "I create "the fruit of the lips." Some of these trees bear precious fruits, and it is a lovely sight to behold them laden with them in their seasons, Prov. xxv. 11. "A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in "pictures of silver." Such a tongue is a tree of life. Others of these trees bear evil fruit, grapes of Sodom, and clusters of Gomorrah. I shall only insist upon two sorts of these fruits, viz. (1.) Withered, sapless fruit; I mean idle and unprofitable words. (2.) Rotten and corrupt fruit; I mean, profane oaths, and profanations of the sacred name of God. No fruit in the world so apt to corrupt and taint as the fruit of the lips. When it is so, the scripture calls it σαπρος λογος, corrupt or rotten communication, Eph. iv. 29. To prevent this the

Spirit of God prescribes an excellent way to season our words, and keep them sweet and sound, that they may neither wither nor become idle and sapless, or putrify and become rotten, as profane words are, Col. iv. 6. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with "salt, that you may know how to answer every man." Oh! if the salt of grace were once cast into the fountain, the heart-streams must needs become more savoury and pleasant, as the waters of Marah when they were healed. My present work is to attempt the cure of this double evil of *idle words* and *profane oaths*, whereof thousands among you are deeply guilty. I shall begin with the first, viz.

I. IDLE WORDS. That is, useless chat, unprofitable talk, that is not referred any way to the glory of God. This is a common evil, and little regarded by most men; but yet a sin of severer aggravations than the most imagine: light words weigh heavy in God's balance.

Arg. 1. For, first, The evil of them is exceedingly aggravated by this: they abuse and pervert the tongue, that noble member, from that employment and use which God by the law of creation designed it to. God gave not to man the organs and power of speech, (which is his excellency above the beasts) to serve a passion or vain humour, to vent the froth and vanity of his spirit; but to extol the Creator, and render him the praise of all his admirable and glorious works. For though the creation be a curious well-tuned instrument, yet man is the musician that must touch it, and make the melody. This was the end of God in forming those instruments and organs: but now hereby they are subject to Satan and lust, and employed to the dishonour of God who made them. God is pleased to suspend the power of speech (as we see in children) until reason begins to bud in them: they have not the liberty of one, until they have the use of the other; which plainly shews, that God is not willing to have our words run waste.

Arg. 2. It is a sinful wasting of our precious time; and that puts a further aggravation upon it. Consider, sirs, the time of life is but a little spot betwixt two eternities. The long-suffering God wheels about those glorious celestial bodies over your heads in a constant revolution to beget time for you; and the preciousness of every minute thereof results from its use and end: it is intended and afforded as a space to you to repent in, Rev. ii. 21. And therefore great things depend upon it: no less than your eternal happiness or misery hangs upon those precious opportunities. Every minute of it hath an influence into eternity. How would the damned value one hour of it if they might enjoy it! The business you have to do in it is of unspeakable weight and concernment: this great work, this soul-work, and eternity-work, lies upon your hands; you are cast into straits of time about it: and, if so, O what an evil is it in you to waste it away thus to no purpose!

Arg. 3. It is a sin that few are sensible of as they are of other sins, and therefore the more dangerous. It is commonly committed, and that without checks of conscience. Other sins, as murder and adultery, though they be horrid sins, yet are but seldom committed, and when they are, conscience is startled at the horridness of them; few, except they be prodigious wretches indeed, dare make light of them. But now for idle and vain words, there are innumerable swarms of these every day, and few regard them. The intercourse betwixt the heart and tongue is quick; they are quickly committed, and as easily forgotten.

Arg. 4. And then, 4thly, They have mischievous effects upon others. How long doth an idle word, or foolish jest, stick in men's minds, and become an occasion of much sin to them? The froth and vanity of thy spirit, which thy tongue so freely vents among thy vain companions, may be working in their minds when thou art in the dust, and so be transmitted from one to another; for unto that no more is requisite than an *objective existence* of those vain words in their memories. And thus mayest thou be sinning in the persons of thy companions, when thou art turned into dust. And this is one reason that Suarez gives for a general judgment, after men have passed their particular judgment immediately after their death, 'Because '(saith he) after this, multitudes of sins by their means will be com-'mitted in the world, for which they must yet be judged to a fuller 'measure of wrath.' So that look as many of the precious servants of God, now in glory, have left many weighty and holy sayings behind them, by which many thousands of souls have been benefited, and God glorified on earth, after they had left it: so thou leavest that vanity upon the minds of others behind thee, by which he may be dishonoured to many generations. And then,

II. For PROFANE OATHS, the corrupt fruit of a graceless heart; oh! how common are these among you? Yea, the habit of swearing is so strengthened in some, that they have lost all sense and conscience of the sin. Now, oh! that I might prevail with you to repent of this wickedness, and break the force of this customary evil among you! will you but give me the reading of a few pages more, and weigh with the reason of men, what you read? If you will not hearken to counsel, it is a fatal sign, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. and you shal mourn for this obstinacy hereafter, Prov. v. 12, 13. Desperate is that evil that scorns the remedy. And if you have patience to read it, the Lord give you an heart to consider what you read, and obey the counsels of God; or else it were better thine eyes had never seen these lines. Well, then, I beseech you consider,

Arg. 1. That profane oaths are an high abuse of the dreadful and sacred name of God, which should neither be spoken or thought of without the deepest awe and reverence. It is the taking of that sacred name in vain, Exod. xx. 7. Now God is exceeding tender and jealous over his name; it is dear to him; his name is dreadful and

glorious; Mal. i. 14. "I am a great king, and my name is dreadful "among the Heathen." The heathens would not ordinarily mention the names of such as they reverenced. Suetonius saith, that Augustus prohibited the common use of his name: he thought it an indignity to have his name tossed up and down in every one's mouth. Yea, says Dr. Willet on Exod. xx. it was an use among them to keep secret such names as they would have in reverence. They durst not mention the name of Demogorgon, whom they held to be the first god: they thought when he was named, the earth would tremble. Also the name of Mercurius Tresmegistus, was very sparingly used, because of that reverence the people had for him. Now, consider, shall poor worms be so tender of preserving the reverence of their names! Shall not heathens dare to use the names of their idols; and shall the sacred and dreadful name of the true God be thus bandied up and down by tongues of his own creatures? Will not God be avenged for these abuses of his name? Be confident, it shall one day be sanctified upon you in judgment, because ye did not sanctify it according to your duty.

Arg. 2. Swearing is a part of the worship of God; and therefore profane swearing can be no less than the profanation of his worship, and robbing him of all the glory he has thereby; Deut. vi. 13. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear "by his name." So Jer. iv. 2. "Thou shalt swear the Lord liv- "eth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." If a man swear by God after this manner, God is exceedingly glorified thereby. Now, that you may see what revenue of glory God hath from this part of his worship, and how it becomes a part of Divine worship, you must know then an oath is nothing else but the *asking or desiring a Divine testimony, for the confirmation of the truth of our testimony:* Heb. vi. 16. "For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for "[confirmation] is to them an end of all strife." The corruption of human nature by the fall has made man such a false and fickle creature, that his single testimony cannot be sufficient security for another especially in weighty cases, to rest upon; and therefore in swearing, he calleth God for a witness of the truth of what he affirms, or promiseth: I say, calleth God to be a witness of the truth of what he saith, because he is *truth* itself, and cannot lie, Heb. vi. 18. Now this calling for, or asking of a testimony from God, makes an oath become a part of God's worship, and gives him a great deal of glory and honour; for hereby he that sweareth acknowledgeth his *omnisciency* and *infallible truth* and *righteousness.* His *omnisciency* is acknowledged: for by this appeal to him, we imply and acknowledge him to be the *Searcher of the heart and reins;* that he knows the secret intents and meaning of our spirits. *His supreme* and *infallible truth* is also acknowledged; for this is manifestly carried in an oath, that though I am a false and deceitful creature, and my affirmation cannot obtain universal and full credence, yet he that is greater than

I, by whose name I swear, cannot deceive. And, lastly, his *righteousness* is acknowledged in an oath: for he that sweareth doth, either *expressly* or *implicity*, put himself under the curse and wrath of God, if he swear falsely. Every oath hath an execration or imprecation in it, Neh. x. 29. "They entered into a curse, and an "oath, to walk in God's law." And so 2 Cor. i. 23. "I call God "for a record upon my soul." And the usual form in the Old Testament was, "The Lord do so to me, and more also." Now hereby God hath the glory of his righteousness and justice given him by the creature, and therefore it is a choice part of the Divine worship, or of that homage which a creature oweth to his God. And if this be so, then how easily may the sin of rash and profane oaths be hence argued and aggravated? The more excellent any thing is by an institution of God, by so much more horrid and abominable is the abuse thereof. O how often is the dreadful Majesty of heaven and earth called to witness to frivolous things! and oft to be a witness of our rage and fury! as 1 Sam. xiv. 39. Is it a light thing to rob him of his peculiar glory, and subject poor souls to his curse and wrath, who has said, "He will be a swift witness against you?" Mal. iii. 5. Your tongues are nimble in committing this sin, and God will be swift in punishing it.

Arg. 3. It is a sin which God hath severely threatened to punish. and that with temporal and corporal plagues: "For by reason of "oaths, the land mourns," Hos. iv. 2, 3. That is, it brings the heavy judgment of God upon whole nations, under which they shall mourn. And in Zech. v. 2, 3, 4. You have there *a roll of curses;* i. e. a catalogue of judgments and woes, *the length thereof twenty cubits;* (i. e. ten yards) to set out the multitude of woes contained in it: it is a long catalogue, and *a flying roll*, to denote the *swiftness* of it: it flies towards the house of the swearer; it makes haste. The judgments that are written in it linger not, but are even in pain to be delivered. And this flying roll, full of dreadful woes, flies and enters into the house of the swearer; *and it shall therein remain*, saith the Lord; it shall cleave to his family; none shall claw off these woes from him: and it shall consume the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, i. e. bring utter subversion, ruin, and desolation to his house. O dreadful sin! what a desolation doth it make! your mouths are full of oaths, and your houses shall be full of curses. Woe to that wretched family, into which this flying roll shall enter! Woe, I say, to the wretched inhabitants thereof! "The curse of "the Lord (saith Solomon) is in the house of the wicked; but he "blesseth the [habitation] of the just," Prov. iii. 33. *Tuguriolum*, i. e. (saith Mercer) *his poor little tenement or cottage.* There is a blessing, the promises, like clouds of blessing, dwell over it, and drop mercies on it; but a curse in the house of the wicked. Ah! how many stately mansions are there, in which little other language but oaths and curses are heard! and these are as so much gun-powder

laid under the foundation of them, which, when justice shall set fire to, O what work will it make! woe to the inhabitants thereof! Well then, break off this sin by repentance, unless you intend to ruin your families, and bring all the curses of God into your houses. If you have no pity for yourselves, yet pity your posterity; have mercy for your wives and children; do not ruin all for the indulgence of a lust.

Arg. 4. But that is not all; it brings soul-judgments and spiritual plagues upon you: it brings hell along with it. And if thou be not afraid to sin, yet methinks, thou shouldst be afraid to *burn:* if the love of God can work nothing upon thy brawny heart, yet, methinks, the terrors of the Lord should startle and affright it. To this purpose, I beseech you to weigh these scriptures; and methinks, unless God hath lost all his authority with you, and hell all its terrors, it should startle you. The first is that dreadful scripture, James v. 12. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, "neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea, "be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into [condemnation."] O view this text seriously! methinks it should be like the fingers that came forth and wrote upon the wall that dreadful sentence that changed the countenance of a king, and that in the height of a frolic humour, and made his knees smite together. Mark, [*above all things*] a form of vehemency and earnestness, like that, Eph. vi. 16. "But above all, taking the shield of faith." As faith hath a prelation there before all the graces, so swearing here before all other vices. [*Swear not,*] i. e. *vainly, rashly, profanely;* for otherwise it is a lawful thing, and a part of God's worship, as I have shewed: but swear not vain oaths, by the creatures, heaven, or earth, &c. which is to advance the creature into the room of God: a sin to which the Jews were much addicted. But, "let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay;" i. e. accustom yourselves to short and plain affirmations and negations, to a simple and candid expression of your minds. And the thundering argument that backs it, is this, [*lest ye fall into condemnation;*] i. e. lest for these things the Judge of heaven and earth pass a sentence of condemnation to hell upon you. O sirs! dare you touch with this hot iron? Dare you from henceforth commit that sin, that you know will bring you under the condemnation and judgment of God? Do you know what it is for a soul to be cast at God's bar? Did you never see a poor malefactor tried at the assizes, and observe how his face gathers paleness, how his legs tremble, and death displays its colours in his cheeks, when sentence is given upon him? But what is that to God's condemnation? What is a gallows to hell? Another text I would recommend to your consideration is that, Exod. xx. 7. "The Lord will not hold him guilt-"less that taketh his name in vain;" where vain oaths are especially included. Now, what doth God mean, when he saith, he will not hold him guiltless? The meaning is plain, his sins shall be reckoned and imputed to him; they shall lie upon his soul; he shall be bound

over to answer to God for them. O terrible sentence! what soul can bear it, or stand before it! "Blessed is the man (saith David) to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity:" Surely then, cursed is that man to whom God will impute them: and to the swearer they shall all be imputed, if he break not off his sin by repentance, and get a Christ the sooner. Oh, how darest thou think of going before the Lord with the guilt of all thy sins upon thee? When Christ would administer the very spirit of joy into one sentence to a poor sinner, Mat. ix. 2. He said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be "forgiven." And when God would contract the sum of all misery into one word, he saith, "His sins shall lie down with him in the "dust," Job xx. 11. Ah, soul! one of these days thou shalt be laid on thy death-bed, or see the waves that shall entomb thee, leaping and roaring upon every side; and then thou wilt surely have other thoughts of the happiness that lies in remission of sin than thou hast now. Observe the most incorrigible sinner then; hark, how he sighs and groans, and cries, Ah, Lord! and must I die? And then see how the tears trickle down his cheeks, and his heart ready to burst within him. Why, what is the matter? Oh! the Lord will not pardon him, he holds him guilty! If he were sure his sins were forgiven, then he could die: but, oh! to appear before the Lord in them, appals him, daunts him, kills the very heart of him! he would fain cry for mercy, but conscience stops his mouth. O, saith conscience, how canst thou move that tongue to God in prayer for mercy, that hath so often rent and torn his glorious name, by oaths and curses? Sirs, I pray you do not make light of these things; they will look wishfully upon you one of these days, except ye prevent it by sound conversion.

Arg. 5. And then, lastly, to name no more, I pray you consider, that a custom of vain words and profane oaths, is as plain an indication and discovery of an unregenerate soul, as any in the world: this is a sure sign thou art none of Christ's, nor hast any thing to do with the promises and privileges of his people; for by this the scripture distinguisheth the state of saints and sinners, Eccl. ix. 2. "There "is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean "and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sa- "crificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner: and he that swear- "eth, as he that feareth an oath." Mark, he that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath, do as manifestly distinguish the children of God from wicked men, as clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, sacrificing and not sacrificing. The fruit of the tongue plainly shews what the tree is that bears it; Isa. ii. 6. "The vile person will speak "villany; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." *Loquere, ut videam*, said one; Speak, that I may see what you are. Look, what is in the heart, that is vented by the tongue; where the treasures of grace are in the heart, words ministering grace will be in the lips; Psal. xxxvii. 30. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh

" wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; for the law of the " Lord is in his heart." To this sense we must understand that scripture, Mat. xii. 37. " By thy words thou shalt be justified, and " by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Certainly justification and condemnation, in the day of judgment shall not pass upon us merely for the good or bad words we have spoken; but according to the state of the person and frame of the heart. But the meaning is, that our words shall justify or condemn us in that day, as evidence of the state and frame of the soul. We use to say, such witnesses hanged a man; the meaning is, the evidence they gave cast and condemned him. O think seriously of this; if words evidence the state of the soul, what a woful state must thy soul needs be in, whose mouth overflows with oaths and curses! How many witnesses will be brought in, to cast thee in the great day? " Your own tongue " shall then fall upon you," as the expression is, Psal. lxiv. 8. And out of your own mouth God will fetch abundant evidence to condemn you. And thus I have opened unto you the evil of vain words and profane oaths; and presented to your view their several aggravations. If by these things there be a relenting pang upon thine heart, and a serious resolution of reformation, then I shall recommend these few helps or means to thy perusal, and conclude this head: And the first help is this,

Help 1. Seriously fix in thy thoughts that scripture, Mat. xii. 36. " But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they " shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." O let it sound in thine ears day and night! O ponder them in thy heart! [*I say unto you*] I that have always been in the Father's bosom, and do fully know his mind, that I am constituted the Judge of quick and dead, and do fully understand the rule of judgment, and the whole process thereof, I say, and do assure you, that [*every idle word that men shall speak,*] i. e. every word that hath not a tendency and reference to the glory of God, though there be no other obliquity of evil in them than this, that they want a good end: how much more then, scurrilous words, bloody oaths, and blasphemies? [*Men shall give an account thereof;*] that is, shall be cast and condemned to suffer the wrath of God for them; as appears by that parallel scripture, 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5. For as the learned observe, there is plainly a *metalepsis* in these words; the *antecedent to give an account*, is put for the *consequent*, punishment, and condemnation to hell-fire: the certainty whereof admits but of this one exception, viz. intervenient repentance, or pardon obtained through the blood of Christ here before you be presented at that judgment-seat. O then, what a bridle should this text be to thy extravagant tongue! I remember Hierom was wont to say, ' Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I still hear the ' sound of these words in mine ear, Arise, ye dead, and come to judg- ' ment.' O that the sound of these words may be always in your ears!

Help 2. Consider before you speak, and be not rash to utter words without knowledge. He that speaks what he thinks not, speaks *hypocritically*; and he that thinks not what to speak, speaks *inconsiderately*. You have cause to weigh your words before you deliver them by your tongue; for whether you do, or do not, the Lord *pondereth* them: records are kept of them, else you could not be called to an account for them, as I shewed you, you must.

Help 3. Resign up your tongue to God every day, and beg him to guide and keep it. So did David, Psal. cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O "Lord, before my mouth, and keep thou the door of my lips." Beg him to keep you from provocations and temptations; or, if you fall into them, intreat him for strength to rule your spirits in them, that you may not be conquered by temptations.

Help 4. But above all, labour to get your souls cleansed and purified by faith, possessed with saving and gracious principles: all other means will be ineffectual without this. O see the vileness of thy nature, and the necessity of a change to pass upon it! First make the tree good, and then his fruit good: a new nature will produce new words and actions. To bind your souls with vows and resolutions, while you are strangers to a regenerate work, is to bind Samson with green withs, whilst his locks remain upon his head. I will shut up this with the advice of that divine poet, Mr. George Herbert; it may be, it may affect thee, and run in thy thoughts when thou art alone.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain;
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust and wine plead a pleasure; avarice gain:
But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice,
Lets his soul run nought, as little fearing.
Were I an Epicure, I could hate swearing.

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oaths which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin.
He pares the apple that will cleanly feed.
Play not away the virtue of that name,
Which is thy best stake when grief makes thee tame.

The cheapest sins most dearly punish'd are,
Because to shun them also is so cheap;
For we have wit to mark them, and to spare.
O crumble not away thy soul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad,
Pride and full sins have made the way a road.

CAUTION III.

THE next danger I shall give you warning of, is the sin of *uncleanness;* with which I fear too many of the rude and looser sort of seamen defile themselves; and possibly, the temptations to this sin are advantaged, and strengthened upon them more than others, by their condition and employments. Let no man be offended that I here give warning of this evil: I intend to asperse no man's person, or raise up jealousy against any; but would faithfully discharge my duty to all, and that in all things. It was the complaint of Salvian* many hundred years ago, that he could not speak against the vices of men, but one or other would thus object; 'There he meant me; 'he hit me:' and so storm and fret. Alas (as he replieth) it is not 'we that speak to you, but your own conscience; we speak to the 'order, but conscience speaks to the person.' I shall use no other apology in this case. That this sin is a dreadful gulph, a quick-sand that hath sucked in, and destroyed thousands, is truly apparent both from scripture and experience. Solomon tells us, Prov. xxii. 14. that it is a "deep ditch, into which such as are abhorred of the Lord shall "fall." Oh! the multitudes of dead that are there! and if so, I cannot in duty to God, or in love to you, be silent, where the danger is so great. It is both needless, and besides my intention here is to insist largely upon the explication of the particulars in which uncleanness is distributed: the more ordinary and common sins of this kind are known by the names of adultery and fornication. The latter is when single persons come together out of the state of marriage. The former is, when at least one of the persons committing uncleanness is contracted in marriage. This now is the evil I shall warn you of. And, that thou mayest never fall into this pit, I shall endeavour to hedge and fence up the way to it by these ensuing arguments: and, oh! that the light of every argument may be powerfully reflected upon your conscience! Many men are wise in generals, but very vain εν διαλογισμοις, in the reasonings or imaginations, as the apostle calls them, Rom. i. 21. i. e. in their *practical inferences.* They are good at speculation, but bunglers at application: but it is truth in the particulars, that, like an hot iron, pierces; and, oh! that you may find these to be such in your soul! To that end consider,

Arg. 1. The names and titles by which this sin is known in scripture are very vile and base. The Spirit of God, doubtless, hath put such odious names upon it, on purpose to deter and affright men from it. In general it is called *lust;* and so (as one notes) it beareth the name of its mother; it is *uncleanness* in the abstract, Numb. v. 19. filthiness itself; *an abomination*, Ezek. xxii. 11. And they that commit it are called *abominable*, Rev. xxi. 8. Varro saith, the word imports that which is not lawful to mention; or rather, abominable

* *Guber. Dei, lib. 4. Salv.*

persons, such as are not fit for the society of men, such as should be hissed out of all men's company: they are rather to be reckoned to beasts than men. Yea, the scripture compares them to the filthiest of beasts, even to dogs. When Ishbosheth charged this sin upon Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 8. "Am I a dog's head (saith he) that thou chargest "me with a fault concerning this woman?" And in Deut. xxiii. 18. the hire of a whore, and the "price of a dog," are put together. The expression of this lust in words or gesture, is called *neighing*, Jer. v. 8. Even as fed horses do, that scatter their lust promiscuously. Or, if the scripture speaks of them as men, yet it allows them but the external shape of men, not the understanding of men. Among the Jews they were called fools in Israel, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. and so Prov. vi. 32. "Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, "lacketh understanding." And sinners, Luke vii. 37. "And be-"hold a woman that was a [sinner,]" that is, an eminent notorious sinner: by which term the scripture decyphers an unclean person, as if, among sinners, there were none of such a prodigious stature in sin as they. And we find, that when the Spirit of God would set forth any sin by an odious name, he calls it adultery; so idolatry is called adultery, Ezek. xvi. 32. And indeed this spiritual and corporeal adultery oftentimes are found in the same persons. They that give themselves up to the one, are, by the righteous hand of God given up to the other, as it is too manifestly and frequently exemplified in the world. So earthly-mindedness hath this name put upon it on purpose to affright men from it, James iv. 4. Now certainly God would never borrow the name of this sin to set out the evil of other sins. If it were not most vile and abominable. It is called the sin of the Gentiles, or heathens, 1 Thess. iv. 5. And, oh! that we could say, it were only among them that know not God? How then are you able to look these scriptures in the face, and not blush? O what a sin is this! Art thou willing to be ranked with fools, dogs, sinners, heathens, and take thy lot with them? God hath planted that affection of shame in thy nature to be as a guard against such filthy lusts; it is a sin that hath filthiness enough in it to defile the tongue that mentions it, Eph. v. 3.

Arg. 2. It is a sin that the God of heaven hath often prohibited and severely condemned in the word, which abundantly declares his abhorrence of it. You have prohibition upon prohibition, and threatening upon threatening in the word against it; Exod. xx. 14. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This was delivered upon mount Sinai with the greatest solemnity and terror by the mouth of God himself. Turn to, and ponder the following scriptures among many others, Prov. v. 2, 3, 4. Acts v. 29. Rom. i. 24, 29. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 13,—18. 2 Cor. xii. 21. Gal. v. 29. Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Thess. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. Heb. xii. 16. Heb. xiii. 4. All these, with many others, are the true sayings of God: by them thou shalt be tried in the last day. Now, consider how terrible it will be

to have so many words of God, and such terrible ones too as most of those are, to be brought in and pleaded against thy soul in that day! Mountains and hills may depart, but these words shall not depart: heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one tittle of the word shall pass away. Believe it, sinner, as sure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet, they shall one day take hold of thee, though we poor worms who plead them with thee, die and perish: Zech. i. 5, 6. The Lord tells us it shall not fall to the ground. Which is a borrowed speech from a dart that is flung with a weak hand; it goes not home to the mark, but falls to the ground by the way. None of these words shall so fall to the ground.

Arg. 3. It is a sin that defiles and destroys the body; 1 Cor. vi. 18. "He that committeth adultery, sinneth against his own body." In most other sins the body is the *instrument*, here it is the *object* against which the sin is committed: that body of thine, which should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, is turned into a sty of filthiness; yea, it not only *defiles*, but destroys it. Job calls it a "fire that burn-" eth to destruction," Job xxxi. 12. or as the Septuagint reads it, a fire that burneth in all the members. It is a sin that God hath plagued with strange and terrible diseases; that Morbus Gallicus, and Sudor Anglicus, and that Plica Polonica, whereof you may read in Bolton's four last things, page 30. and Sclater on Rom. i. 30. These were judgments sent immediately by God's own hand, to correct the new sins and enormities of the world; for they seem to put the best physicians besides their books. O how terrible is it to lie groaning under the sad effects of this sin! As Solomon tells us, Prov. v. 11. "And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed." To this sense some expound that terrible text, Heb. xiii. 4 "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;" i. e. with some remarkable judgment inflicted on them in this world: if it escape the punishment of men, it shall not escape the vengeance of God. Ah! with what comfort may a man lie down upon a sick-bed, when the sickness can be looked upon as a fatherly visitation coming in mercy? But thou that shortenest thy life, and bringeth sickness on thyself by such a sin, art the devil's martyr; and to whom canst thou turn in such a day for comfort?

Arg. 4. Consider what an indelible blot it is to thy nature, which can never be wiped away; though thou escape with thy life, yet, as one says, thou shalt be burnt in the hand, yea, branded in the forehead. What a foul scare is that upon the face of David himself, which abides to this day? "He was upright in all things, save in the "matter of Uriah." And how was he slighted by his own children and servants after he had committed this sin! compare 1 Sam. ii. 30. with 2 Sam. xi. 10, 11. "A wound and dishonour shall he get; "and his reproach shall not be wiped away. This is to give thine "honour to another," Prov. 5. 9. The shame and reproach at-

tending it should be a preservative from it. Indeed the devil tempts to it by hopes of secresy and concealment; but though many other sins lie hid, and possibly shall never come to light until that day of manifestation of all hidden things, yet this is a sin that is most usually discovered. Under the law, God appointed an extraordinary way for the discovery of it, Numb. v. 13. And to this day the providence of God doth often very strangely bring it to light, though it be a deed of darkness: the Lord hath many times brought such persons, either by terror of conscience, phrensy, or some other means, to be the publishers and proclaimers of their own shame. Yea, observe this, said the reverend Mr. Hildersham on the fourth of John, even those that are most cunning to conceal and hide it from the eyes of the world, yet through the just judgment of God, every one suspects and condemns them for it: this dashes in pieces, at one stroke, that vessel in which the precious ointment of a good name is carried. A fool in Israel shall be thy title; and even children shall point at thee.

Arg. 5. It scatters thy substance, and roots up the foundation of thy estate; Job xxxi. 12. "It roots up all thy increase, "Strangers "shall be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours shall be in the "house of a stranger," Prov. v. 10. "For by means of a whorish "woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread," Prov. vi. 26. It gives rags for its livery (saith one) and though it be *furthered* by the fulness, yet it is *followed* with a morsel of bread. This is one of those temporal judgments with which God punishes the unclean person in this life. The word Delilah, which is the name of a harlot, is conceived to come from a root that signifies to exhaust, drain, or draw dry. This sin will quickly exhaust the fullest estate; and, oh! what a dreadful thing will this be, when God shall require an account of thy stewardship in the great day! how righteous is it, that that man should be fuel to the wrath of God, whose health and wealth have been so much fuel to maintain the flame of lust! O how lavish of their estates are sinners to satisfy their lusts! if the members of Christ be sick or in prison, they may there perish and starve before they will relieve them; but to obtain their lusts, O how expensive! "Ask me never so much, and I will give it," saith Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. 12. "Ask what thou wilt, and it shall be given thee," said Herod to the daughter of Herodias. Well, you are liberal in spending treasures upon your lusts; and believe it, God will spend treasures of wrath to punish you for your lusts. It had been a thousand times better for thee thou hadst never had an estate, that thou hadst begged thy bread from door to door, than to have such a sad reckoning as thou shalt shortly have for it.

Arg. 6. O stand off from this sin, because it is a pit, out of which very few have been recovered that have fallen therein. Few are the footsteps of returners from this den. The longer a man lives in it, the less power he hath to leave it. It is not only a *damning*, but an

infatuating sin. The danger of falling this way must needs be great, and the fall very desperate; because few that fall into it do ever rise again. I shall lay two very terrible scriptures before you to this purpose, either of them enough to drive thee speedily to Christ, or to drive thee out of thy wits; the one is that, Eccl. vii. 26. "And I "find more bitter than death, the woman whose heart is snares and "nets, and her hands as bands: Whoso pleaseth God shall escape "from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her." The argument which the Spirit of God uses here to dissuade from this sin, is taken from the *subject;* they that fall into it, for the most part, are persons in whom God has no delight, and so in judgment are delivered up to it, and never recovered by grace from it. The other is that in Prov. xxii. 14. "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is "abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein." O terrible word! able to daunt the heart of the securest sinner. Your whores *embrace* you, yea, but God *abhors* you! You have their *love*, Oh but you are under God's *hatred!* What say you to these two scriptures? If you are not atheists, methinks such a word from the mouth of God, should strike like a dart through thy soul. And upon this account it is, that they never are recovered, because God has no delight in them. If this be not enough, view one scripture more, Prov. ii. 18, 19. "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto "the dead: None that go to her, return again, neither take they "hold of the paths of life." Reader, if thou be a person addicted to this sin, go thy way, and think seriously what a case thou art in. *None return again*, i. e. a very few of many: The examples of such as have been recovered are very rare. Pliny tells us, the mermaids are commonly seen in green meadows, and have inchanting voices; but there are always found heaps of dead men's bones lying by them. This may be but a fabulous story: But I am sure, it is true of the harlot, whose syren songs have allured thousands to their inevitable destruction. It is a captivating sin that leads away the sinner in triumph; they cannot deliver their souls; Prov. vii. 22. "He goeth "after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a [fool] "to the correction of the stocks." Mark, a fool; it dementates and befools men, takes away their understanding; the Septuagint renders it, ωσπερ κυων επι δεσμας, as a dog to the collar; or, like as we use to say, a dog in a string. I have read of one, that having by this sin wasted his body, was told by physicians, that except he left it, he would quickly lose his eyes: He answered, if it be so, then *vale lumen amicum*, farewell sweet light. And I remember, Luther writes of a certain nobleman in his country, who was so besotted with the sin of whoredom, that he was not ashamed to say, that if he might live here for ever, and be carried from one stew to another, he would never desire any other heaven. The greatest conquerors, that have subdued kingdoms, and scorned to be commanded by any, have been miserably enslaved and captivated by this lust.

O think sadly upon this argument! God often gives them up to impertinency, and will not spend a rod upon them to reclaim them. See Hos. iv. 14. Rev. xxii. 11.

Arg. 7. And then in the *7th* place, those few that have been recovered by repentance out of it, O how bitter hath God made it to their souls! "I find it (saith Solomon) more bitter than death," Eccl. vii. 26. Death is a very bitter thing; O what a struggling and reluctance is there in nature against it; but this is more bitter. Poor David found it so, when he roared under those bloody lashes of conscience for it, in Psal. li. Ah! when the Lord shall open the poor sinner's eyes, to see the horror and guilt he hath hereby contracted upon his own poor soul, it will haunt him as a ghost, day and night, and terrify his soul with dreadful forms and representations! O dear bought pleasure, if this were all it should cost! What is now become of the pleasure of sin? O what gall and wormwood wilt thou taste, when once the Lord shall bring thee to a sight of it! The Hebrew word for repentance *(Nacham,)* and the Greek word *(Metamelia,)* the one signifies, an irking of the soul, and the other signifies, after-grief: Yea, it is called, a renting of the heart, as if it were torn in pieces in a man's breast. Ask such a poor soul, what it thinks of such courses now? Oh! now it loaths, abhors itself for them. Ask him, if he dare sin in that kind again? You may as well ask me (will he answer) whether I will thrust my hand into the fire. Oh! it breeds an indignation in him against himself. That word, αγανακτησιν, 2 Cor. vii. 11. signifies the rising of the stomach with very rage, and being sick with anger. Religious wrath is the fiercest wrath. O what a furnace is the breast of a poor penitent! what fumes, what heats do abound in it, whilst the sin is even before him, and the sense of the guilt upon him? One night of carnal pleasure will keep thee many days and nights upon the rack of horror, if ever God give thee repentance unto life.

Arg. 8. And if thou never repent, as indeed but few do that fall into this sin, then consider how God will follow thee with eternal vengeance: Thou shalt have flaming fire for burning lust. This is a sin that hath the scent of fire and brimstone with it, wherever you meet with it in scripture. The harlot's guests are lodged in the *depths of hell*, Prov. ix. 18. No more perfumed beds; they must now lie down in flames. Whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8. Such shall not inherit the kingdom of God and Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 9. No dog shall come into the New Jerusalem; there shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination. You have spent your strength upon sin, and now God sets himself a work to shew the glory of his power in punishing, Rom. ix. 22. The wrath of God is transacted upon them in hell by his own immediate hand, Heb. x. 30. Because no creature is strong enough to convey all his wrath, and it must all be poured out upon

them, therefore he himself will torment them for ever with his own immediate power: Now he will *stir up all his wrath*, and sinners shall know the price of their pleasures. The punishment of Sodom is a little map of hell, as I may say. O how terrible a day was that upon those unclean wretches! But that fire was not of many days continuance: When it had consumed them, and their houses, it went out for want of matter: but here, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it. The pleasure was quickly gone, but the sting and torment abide for ever. "Who knoweth the "power of his anger? Even according to his fear, so is his wrath," Psal. xc. 11. Oh consider, how will his almighty power rack and torment thee! Think on this when sin comes with a smiling face towards thee in the temptation. O think! If the human nature of Christ recoiled, when his cup of wrath was given him to drink; if he were sore amazed at it, how shalt thou, a poor worm, bear and grapple with it for ever?

Arg. 9. Consider further, how closely soever thou carriest thy wickedness in this world, though it should never be discovered here, yet there is a day coming when all will out, and that before angels and men. God will rip up thy secret sins in the face of that great congregation at the day of judgment: Then that which was done in secret shall be proclaimed as upon the house-top, Luke xii. 3. "Then God will judge the secrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. "the "hidden things of darkness will be brought into the open light." Sinner, there will be no sculking for thee in the grave, no declining this bar; thou refusedst, indeed, to come to the *throne of grace*, when God invited thee, but there will be no refusing to appear before the *bar of justice*, when Christ shall summon thee. And as thou canst not decline appearing, so neither canst thou then palliate and hide thy wickedness any longer; for then shall the books be opened; the book of God's omniscience, and the book of thine own conscience, wherein all thy secret villany is recorded: for though it ceased to speak to thee, yet it ceased not to write and record thy actions. If thy shameful sins should be divulged now, it would make thee tear off thy hair with indignation; but then all will be discovered: Angels and men shall point at thee, and say, lo, this is the man, this is he that carried it so smoothly in the world. Mr. Thomas Fuller relates a story of Ottocar king of Bohemia, 'who refusing to do his 'homage to Rodulphus the first emperor, being at last sorely chastised 'with war, condescended to do him homage privately in a tent; but 'the tent was so contrived by the emperor's servants, (saith th- 'historian) that, by drawing one cord, it was taken all away, and 'so Ottocar presented on his knees, doing homage to the emperor in 'the view of three armies.' O sirs, you think to carry it closely, you wait for the twilight, that none may see you; but, alas! it will be to no end, this day will discover it; and then what confusion and everlasting shame will cover thee! Will not this work then?

Arg. 10. Lastly, consider but one thing more, and I have done. By this sin thou dost not only damn thine own soul, but drawest another to hell with thee. This sin is not as a single bullet that kills but one, but as a chain-shot, it kills many, two at least, unless God give repentance. And if he should give thee repentance, yet the other party may never repent, and so perish for ever through thy wickedness; and oh! what a sad consideration will that be to thee, that such a poor soul is in hell, or likely to go thither by thy means? Thou hast made fast a snare upon a soul, which thou canst not untie; thou hast done that which may be matter of sorrow to thee as long as thou livest; but though thou canst grieve for it, thou canst not remedy it. In other sins it is not so: If thou hadst stolen another's goods, restitution might be made to the injured party, but here can be none: if thou hadst murdered another, thy sin was thine own, not his that was murdered by thee: but this is a complicated sin, defiling both at once; and if neither repent, then, oh! what a sad greeting will these poor wretches have in hell! how will they curse the day that ever they saw each other's face! O what an aggravation of their misery will this be! For look, as it will be matter of joy in heaven, to behold such there as we have been instrumental to save, so must it needs be a stinging aggravation of the misery of the damned to look upon those who have been the instruments and means of their damnation. Oh, methinks if there be any tenderness at all in thy conscience, if this sin have not totally brawned and stupified thee, these arguments should pierce like a sword through thy guilty soul. Reader, I beseech thee, by the mercies of God, if thou hast defiled thy soul by this abominable sin, speedily to repent. O get the blood of sprinkling upon thee; there is yet mercy for such a wretch as thou art, if thou wilt accept the terms of it. "Such were some of "you, but ye are washed," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Publicans and harlots may enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. xxi. 31. Though but few such are recovered, yet how knowest thou but the hand of mercy may pull thee as a brand out of the fire, if now thou wilt return and seek it with tears? Though it be a *fire that consumeth unto destruction*, as Job calls it, Job xxxi. 12. yet it is not an unquenchable fire, the blood of Christ can quench it.

And for you, whom God hath kept hitherto from the contagion of it, O bless the Lord, and use all God's means for the prevention of it. The seeds of this sin are in thy nature; no thanks to thee, but to restraining grace, that thou art not delivered up to it also. And that thou mayest be kept out of this pit, conscionably practise these few directions.

Direct. 1. Beg of God a clean heart, renewed and sanctified by saving grace; all other endeavours do but palliate a cure: the root of this is deep in thy nature; O get that mortified, Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed fornication, adulteries." 1 Pet. ii. 11,

12. " Abstain from fleshly lusts——having your conversation honest." The lust must first be subdued, before the conversation can be honest.

Direct. 2. Walk in the fear of God all the day long, and in the sense of his omniscient eye that is ever upon thee. This kept Joseph from this sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. " How can I do this wickedness and sin " against God?" Consider, the darkness hideth not from him, but shineth as the light. If thou couldst find a place where the eye of God should not discover thee, it were somewhat: thou darest not to act this wickedness in the presence of a child, and wilt thou adventure to commit it before the face of God? see that argument, Prov. v. 20, 21. " And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a " strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the " ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth " all his goings."

Direct. 3. Avoid lewd company, and the society of unclean persons; they are but *panders* for lust. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* The tongues of sinners do cast fire-balls into the hearts of each other, which the corruption within is easily kindled and enflamed by.

Direct. 4. Exercise thyself in thy calling diligently; it will be an excellent means of preventing this sin. It is a good observation that one hath, That Israel was safer in the brick-kilns in Egypt, than in the plains of Moab, 2 Sam. xi. 2. " And it came to pass in the even- " tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked on the roof of " the king's house;" and this was the occasion of his fall. See 1 Tim. v. 11, 13.

Direct. 5. Put a restraint upon thine appetite: feed not to excess. Fulness of bread and idleness were the sins of Sodom, that occasioned such an exuberancy of lust *. " They are like fed horses, every " one neighing after his neighbour's wife. When I had fed them to " the full, then they committed adultery, and asembled themselves " by troops in the harlots' houses," Jer. v. 7, 8. This is a sad requital of the bounty of God, in giving us the enjoyment of the creatures, to make them fuel to lust, and instruments of sin.

Direct. 6. Make choice of a meet yoke-fellow, and delight in her you have chosen. This is a lawful remedy: See 1 Cor. vii. 9. God ordained it, Gen. ii. 21. But herein appears the corruption of nature, that men delight to tread by-paths, and forsake the way which God hath appointed; as that divine poet, Mr. Herbert, saith,

If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been the closer: but since now
God hath impal'd us, on the contrary,
Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plow.

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* *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.*

O what were man, might he himself misplace!
Sure, to be cross, he would shift feet and face.

Stolen waters are sweeter to them than those waters they might lawfully drink at their own fountain: But withal know, it is not the having, but the delighting in a lawful wife, as God requires you to do, that thou must be a fence against this sin. So Solomon, Prov. v. 19. "Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; let her "breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with "her love."

Direct. 7. Take heed of running on in a course of sin (especially superstition and idolatry: in which cases, and as a punishment of which evils God often gives up men to these vile affections, Rom. i. 25, 16. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie; [worshipped] "and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for "ever, Amen. [For this cause] God gave them up to vile affec-"tions," &c. They that defile their souls by idolatrous practices, God suffers, as a just recompence, their bodies also to be defiled with uncleanness, that so their ruin may be hastened. Let the admirers of traditions beware of such a judicial tradition as this is. Woe to him that is thus delivered by the hand of an angry God! No punishment in the world like this, when God punishes sin with sin: when he shall suffer those κοινας εννοιας, those common notices of conscience to be quenched, and all restraints to be moved out of the way of sin, it will not be long e'er that sinner come to his own place.

CAUTION IV.

IN the next place I shall make bold to expostulate a little with your consciences concerning the precious mercies you have received, and the solemn promises you have bound yourselves withal for the obtaining of those mercies. I fear God hath many bankrupt debtors among you, that have dealt slipperily and unfaithfully with him; that have not rendered to the Lord according to the great things he hath done for them, nor according to those good things they have vowed to the mighty God of Jacob. But truly if thou be a *despiser* of mercy, thou shalt be a *pattern* of wrath. God will *remember* them in fury who *forget* him in his favours. I will tell you what a grave and eminent minister once told his people (dealing with them about this sin of unthankfulness for mercy); and I pray God it may affect you duly. * 'Let us all mourn (saith he) and take on; we are all behind 'hand with God. The Christian world is become bankrupt, quite 'broke, makes no return to God for his love. He is issuing out 'process to seize upon body, goods, and life, and will be put off no 'longer. Bloody bailiffs are abroad for bad debtors all the world 'over. Christians are broke, and make no return, and God is break-

* Mr. Lockyer on Col. i. p. 113.

'ing all. He cannot have what he would have, what he should 'have, he will take what he can get: for money he will take goods, 'limbs, arms, legs; he will have his own out of your skin, out of 'your blood, out of your bodies and souls. He is setting the Chris-'tian world as light and as low as they have set his love. Ah, Lord, 'what a time do we live in! long-suffering is at an end, mercy will 'be righted in justice, justice will have all behind, it will be paid 'to the utmost farthing; it will set abroach your blood, but it will 'have all behind,' &c.

Do you hear, souls? Is not this sad news to some of you, who have received vast sums of mercy, and given God your bond for the repayment of him in praise and answerable fruit, and yet forfeited all and lost your credit with God? O how can you look God in the face, with whom you have dealt so perfidiously! I am now come in the name of God to demand his due of you; to call to remembrance the former receipts of mercy which you mind not, but God doth, and there is a witness in your bosom that doth, and will one day witness to your faces, that you have dealt perfidiously with your God. Your souls have been the *graves* of mercy, which should have been as so many gardens where they should have lived and flourished. I am come now to open those graves, and view those mercies that your unthankfulness hath killed and buried, to lay them before your eyes, and see whether your ungrateful hearts will bleed upon them. Buried mercies are not lost for ever; they shall as certainly have a day of * resurrection as thyself: it were better for thee they should have a resurrection now in thy heart, than to rise as witnesses against thee, when thou shalt rise out of the dust: that will be a terrible resurrection indeed, when they shall come to plead against thy soul. Nothing pleads more dreadfully against a soul than abused mercy doth. But I shall come to the particulars upon which I interrogate your consciences; and I pray deal truly and ingenuously in answering these queries.

Quer. 1. And, first, I shall demand of you, whether you never had experience of the power and goodness of God, in restoring you to health from dangerous sickness and diseases? Have you not sometimes had the sentence of death in yourselves? And that possibly when you have been in remote parts, far from your friends and relations, and destitute of all means and accommodations. Did you not say in that condition, as Hezekiah did in a like case? Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11, 12. "I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the "grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall "not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall be-"hold man no more with the inhabitants of the world:" Remember thyself, Man; canst not thou call to mind the day when the arrows of death came whisking by thee, and it may be, hit those next thee; took away those that were as lively and lusty as thyself, when

* There is a double resurrection of mercy; a resurrection of mercy in mercy, and a resurrection of mercy in wrath. It is the first I now labour for, and that to prevent the second.

you began your voyage, and yet they were cast for death, thou for life, and that when there was but an hair's breadth betwixt thee and the grave? Tell me, soul, what friend was that who stood by thee then, when thou wast forsaken of all thy friends? When it may be thy companions stood ready to throw thee over-board, who was it that pitied and remembered thee in thy low estate? Who was it that rebuked thy disease! or, (as * one very aptly expresses it) 'restrained 'the humours of thy body from overflowing and drowning thy life? 'For, when they are let out in a sickness, they would overflow and 'drown it, as the waters would the earth, if God should not say to 'them, stay, you proud waves.' Who was it, man, that when thy body was brought low and weak, and like a crazy rotten ship in a storm, took in water on all sides, so that all the physicians in the world could not have stopped those leaks? Consider what hand that was which quieted and calmed the tempestuous sea, *careened* and mended thy crazy body, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as sound, as strong as ever? Was it not the Lord that hath done all this for thee? Did he not keep back thy soul from the pit, and thy life from perishing? Yea, when thou wast chastened with pain upon thy bed, (as Elihu speaks) Job xxxiii. 19, 20, 21. and the multitude of thy bones with strong pains, so that thy life abhorred bread, and thy soul dainty meat; thy flesh consumed away, that it could not be seen, and thy bones that were not seen, stuck out: Yet then, as it is ver. 28. he delivered thy soul from going down into the pit, and caused thy life to see the light. Had the lamp of life been then extinguished, thou hadst gone down into endless darkness; hell had shut her mouth upon thee. Now tell me soul, what hast thou done with this precious mercy? Hast thou walked before the Lord in a deep sense thereof, and answered his end therein, which was to lead thee to repentance? Or hath thy stupid or disingenuous heart forgotten it, and lost all sense of it, so that God's end is frustrated, and thy salvation not a jot furthered thereby? Oh! if it be so, woe to thee! for the blood of this mercy, which thy ingratitude hath murdered, like the blood of Abel cries to God against thee. What a wretch art thou thus to requite the Lord for such a mercy! He saw thy tears, and heard thy groans, and said within himself, he shall not die, but live. Alas, poor creature! if I cut him off now, he is eternally lost: I will send him back a few years more into the world. I will try him, once more, it may be he will bear some fruits to me from this deliverance; and if so, well; if not, I will cut him down hereafter: He shall be set at liberty upon his good behaviour a little longer. And is all this nothing in thine eyes? Wretch that thou art, dost thou forget and slight such a favour as this? is it worth no more in thine eyes? Well, it would be worth something in the eyes of the poor damned souls, if they might have so many years cut out of their eter-

* Mr. Thomas Goodwin.

nity, for a mere intermission of their torments, much more as a time of patience and mercy. O consider what pity and goodness thou hast abused!

Query 2. Wast thou never cast upon miserable straits and extremities, wherein the good providence of God relieved and supplied thee? How many of you have been beaten so long at sea, by reason of contrary winds and other accidents, until your provisions have been exhausted and spent. To how short allowance have you been kept. And what a mercy would you have esteemed it, if you could but have satisfied nature with a full draught of water. Certainly, this hath ben the case with many of you. O what a price and value did you then set upon these common mercies, which at other times have been slightly overlooked! And when you have seen no hopes of relief, have you not looked sadly one upon another? and, it may be, said, as that widow of Sarepta did to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. "And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a "cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a "cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in "and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." Even such hath been your case; yet hath that God, whose mercies are over all his works, heard your sorrows, and provided relief for you, either by some ship, which providence sent to relieve you in that distress, or by altering the winds, and sending you safe to the land before all your provisions have been spent. And hast thou kept no records of these gracious providences? Yea, dost thou abuse the creature, when thou art brought again to the full enjoyment of it; and possibly receivest the creatures, (whose worth thou hast lately seen in the want of them) without thanksgiving, or a sensible acknowledgment of the goodness of God in them? I say, dost thou thus answer the expectations of God? Well, beware lest God teach such an unworthy creature, by woeful experience, that the opening of his hand to give thee a mercy, is worth the opening thy lips to bless him for it. Beware lest that unthankful mouth that will not bless the Lord for bread and water, have neither the one nor the other to bless him for. I can give you a sad instance in the case, and I have found it it in the writing of an eminent divine, who said he had it from an eye and ear-witness of the truth of it. A young man lying upon his sick-bed, was always calling for meat; but when the meat he called for was brought unto him, he shook and trembled dreadfully at the sight of it, and that in every part of his body, and so continued until his food was carried away. And thus he did as often as any food was brought into his presence; and not being able to eat one bit, pined away; but before his death he freely acknowledged the justice of God in his punishment: For, said he, in the time of my health, I ordinarily received my meat without thanksgiving. O let the abusers and despisers of such mercies fear and tremble!

Quer. 3. Have you not been eminently protected and saved by the

Lord, in the greatest dangers and hazards of life; in fights at sea, when men have dropt down at your right hand, and at your left, and yet the Lord hath covered your heads in the day of battle? And though you have been equally obnoxious to death and danger with others, yet your name was not found among theirs in the list of the dead. Or, in shipwrecks, ah, how narrowly have some of you escaped! a plank hath been cast in, you know not how, to save you, when your companions, for want of it, have gone down to the bottom; or you have been enabled to swim to the shore, when others have fainted in the way, and perished? In what variety of strange and astonishing providences hath God worked towards some of you, and what returns have you made to God for it? Oh, sirs! I beseech you, consider but these two or three things that I shall now lay before you to consider of.

Consid. 1. An heathen will do more for a dung-hill deity than thou, that callest thyself a Christian, wilt do for the true God, that made heaven and earth, Dan. v. 4. They praised the gods of silver, and of gold, and of brass, of iron, wood, and stone. When the Philistines were delivered from the hand of Samson, the text saith, Judg. xvi. 24. "They praised their god," &c. Then Dagon must be extolled. O let shame cover thy face!

Consid. 2. That the abuse of mercy and love is a sin that goes near to the heart of God. Oh! he cannot bear it. It is not the giving out of mercy that troubles him, for that he doth with delight; but the recoiling of his mercies upon him by the creatures' ingratitude, this wounds. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid." And again, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," Isa. i. 2. q. d. O you innocent creatures, which inviolably observe the law of your creation, be you all astonished and clothed in black, to see nature cast by sin so far below itself, and that in a creature so much superior to you as man, who in the very womb was crowned a king, and admitted into the highest order of creatures, and set as lord and master over you; yet doth he act not only below himself, but below the very beasts. "The ox knoweth his owner; (i. e.) there is a kind of gratitude in the beasts, by which they acknowledge their benefactors that feed and preserve them. Oh! what a pathetical exclamation is that, Deut. xxxii. 6. "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise."

Consid. 3. It is a sin that kindles the wrath of God, and will make it burn dreadfully against thee, unthankful sinner: It stirs up the anger of God, in whomsoever it be found, though in the person of a saint, 2 Cron. xxxii. 25. "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Jerusalem." And so you read, Rom. i. that the heathens, because they were not thankful, were given up to vile affections; the sorest plague in the world. It is a sin that the God of mercy scarce knows how to pardon, Jer. v.

7. "How shall I pardon thee for this?" This forgetting of the God that saves us in our extremities is a sin that brings desolation and ruin, the effects of God's high displeasure upon all our temporal enjoyments. See that remarkable scripture, Isa. xvii. 10, 11. "Because "thou hast [forgotten] the God of [thy salvation,] and hast not "been [mindful] of the rock of [thy strength:] Therefore shalt thou "plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips: In the day "shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou "make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be an heap in the "day of grief, and desperate sorrow." The meaning is, that God will blast and curse all thine employments, and thou shalt be under desperate sorrow. The meaning is, that God will blast and curse all thine employments, and thou shalt be under desperate sorrow, by reason of the disappointment of thy hopes.

Consid. 4. It is a sin that cuts off mercy from you in future straits: If you thus requite the Lord for former mercies, never expect the like in future distresses. God is not weary of his blessings, to cast them away upon such souls as are but graves to them. Mark what a reply God made to the Israelites, when they cried unto him for help, being invaded by the Amorites, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. "Did not I de-"liver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the "children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians "also, and the Amalekites, and ye cried unto me, and I delivered you "out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other "gods, wherefore I will deliver you no more." O sad world! it is as if the Lord had said, I have tried what mercy and deliverance will do with you, and I see you are never the better for it: Deliverance is but seed sown upon the rocks. I will cast away no more favours upon you; now look to yourselves, shift for yourselves for time to come; wade through your troubles as well as you can. O brethren! there is nothing more quickly works the ruin of a people than the abuse of mercy. O, methinks, this text should strike terror into your hearts? How often hath God delivered you? Remember thy eminent deliverance at such a time, in such a country, out of such a deep distress: God was gracious to thy cry then, thou hast forgotten and abused his mercy: what now, if God should say as in the text, therefore I will deliver thee no more? Ah, poor soul! what wouldst thou do then, or to whom wilt thou turn? It may be thou wilt cry to the creatures for help and pity; but, alas! to what purpose! They will give as cold and as comfortless an answer as Samuel gave unto Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. "And Samuel said unto Saul, Where-"fore hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answer-"ed, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, "and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither "by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore have I called thee, &c. "Then said Samuel, wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the "Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" Oh!

thou wilt be a poor shiftless creature, if once by abusing mercy thou make it thine enemy!

Consid. 5. It is breach of vows made in distress to obtain these mercies; they have been easily forgotten and violated by thee when thou hast obtained thy desire: A word or two to convince you what a further evil lies in this, and how by this consideration thy sins come to be buoyed up to a greater height and aggravation of sinfulness; and then I have done with this head.

A vow is a promise made to God, in the things of God. The obligation of it is, by casuists, judged to be as great as that of an oath. It is a sacred and solemn bond, wherein a soul binds to God in lawful things; and being once bound by it, it is a most heinous evil to violate it. It is an high piece of dishonesty to fail in what we have promised to men, saith * Dr. Hall; but to disappoint God in our vows, is no less than sacrilege. The act is free and voluntary; but if once a just and lawful vow or promise hath past your lips, saith he, you may not be false to God in keeping it. It is with us for our vows, as it was with Ananias and Sapphira, for their substance: "Whilst "it remained (saith Peter) was it not thine own?" He needed not to sell and give it; but if he will give, he may not reserve: it is death to save some; he lies to the Holy Ghost, that defalks from that which he engaged himself to bestow. If thou hast vowed to the mighty God of Jacob, look to it that thou be faithful in thy performance; for he is a great and jealous God, and will not be mocked.

Now I am confident there be many among you, that, in your former distresses, have solemnly engaged your souls thus to God; that if he would deliver you out of those dangers, and spare your lives, you would walk more strictly, and live more holy lives than ever you did. You have, it may be, engaged your souls to the Lord against those sins, as drunkenness, lying, swearing, uncleanness, or whatsoever evil it was that your conscience then smote you for; the vows of God (I say) are upon many of you. But have you performed those vows that your lips have uttered? Have you dealt truly with God? or have you mocked him, and lied unto him with your lips, and omitted those very duties you promised to perform, and returned to the self-same evils you have promised to forsake? I only put the question, let your consciences answer it. But if it be so, indeed, that thou art a person that makest light of thy engagements to God, as indeed seamen's vows and sick men's promises are, for the most part, deceitful and slippery things, being extorted from them by fear of death, and not from any deep resentment of the necessity, and weight of those duties to which they bind their souls: I say, if this sin lie upon any of your souls, I advise you to go to God speedily, and bewail it; humble yourself greatly before him, admire his patience in forbearing you, and pay unto him what your

* Cases of conscience.

lips have promised. And to move you thereunto, let these considerations among many others, be laid to heart.

Consid. 1. Think seriously upon the greatness of that majesty whom thou hast wronged by lying to him, and falsifying thy engagements. O think sadly on this! it is not man whom thou hast abused, but God; even that God in whose hand thy life and breath is. For although (as one truly observes) there be not in every vow a formal invocation of God, (God being the proper correlate, and, as it were, a party to every vow, and therefore not formally to be invoked for the contestation of it;) yet, there is in every vow an implicit calling God to witness; so that certainly the obligation of a vow is not one jot beneath that of an oath. Now if God be as a party to whom thou hast past thy promise, and that obligation on that ground be so great; Oh what hast thou done! for a poor worm to mock the most glorious Majesty of heaven, and break faith with God; what a dreadful thing is that? if it were but to thy fellow-creature, though the sin would be great; yet not like unto this. Let me say to thee as the prophet Isaiah, chap. vii. 13. "Is it a "small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God "also?" If you dare to deceive and abuse men, dare you do so by God also? Oh! if the exceeding vileness of the sin do not affect thee, yet methinks the danger of provoking so dreadful a Majesty against thee should! And therefore consider,

Consid. 2. That the Lord will most certainly be avenged upon thee for these things, except thou repent. O read, and tremble at the word of God! Eccl. v. 4, 5, 6. "When thou vowest a vow unto "God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay "that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not "vow, than that thou shouldst vow, and not pay. Suffer not thy "mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou, before the an-"gel, that it was an error; wherefore [should God be angry] at "thy voice, and [destroy] the works of thy hands?" Mark, God will be angry, and in that anger he will destroy the work of thy hands, i. e. saith Deodate, 'bring thee and all thy actions to nought, 'by reason of thy perjury.' Now, the anger of God, which thy breach of promise kindles, as appears by this text, is a dreadful fire. O, what creature can stand before it! as Asaph speaks, Psalm lxxvi. 7. "Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may stand "in thy sight, when once thou art angry?"

Consid. 3. Consider, that all this while thou sinnest against knowledge and conviction; for did not thy conscience plainly convince thee, when imminent danger opened its mouth, that the matter of thy neglected vow was a most necessary duty? If not, why didst thou bind thy soul to forsake such practices, and to perform such duties? Thou didst so look upon them then; by which it appears thy conscience is convinced of thy duty, but lust doth master and over-

rule: and if so, poor sinner, what a case art thou in, to go on from day to day sinning against light and knowledge? Is not this a fearful way of sinning? and will not such sinners be plunged deeper into hell than the poor Indians, that never saw the evil of their ways, as thou dost? Ponder but two or three scriptures in thy thoughts, and see what a dreadful way of sinning this is: Rom. ii. 9. "Tribula-"tion, anguish, and wrath, to every soul of man that doth evil, to "the [Jew first], and also to the Gentile." To the Jew first, i. e. to the Jew especially and principally; he had a precedency in means and light, and so let him have in punishment. So James iv. 17. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin;" i. e. Sin with a witness, horrid sin, that surpasses the deeds of the wicked. So Luke xii. 47. "And that servant that knew his Lord's "will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, "shall be beaten with many stripes." Which is a plain allusion to the custom of the Jews in punishing an offender, who being convicted, the judge was to see him bound fast to a pillar, his clothes stript off, and an executioner with a scourge to beat him with so many stripes: but now those stripes came but from the arm of a creature; these that the text speaks of are set on by the omnipotent arm of God. Of the former there was a determinate number set down in their law, as forty stripes; and sometimes they would remit one of that number too, in mercy to the offender, as you see in the example of Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews I received forty stripes, save "one;" but in hell no mitigation at all, nor allay of mercy. The arm of his power supports the creature in its being; while the arm of his justice lays on eternally. Soul, consider these things; do thou not persist any longer then in such a desperate way of sinning against the clear conviction of thine own conscience, which in this case must needs give testimony against thee.

Well then, go to God with the words of David, Psal. lxvi. 13, 14. and say unto him, "I will pay thee my vows which my lips "have uttered, and my tongue hath spoken when I was in trouble." Pay it, soul, and pay it speedily unto God, else he will recover it by justice, and fetch it out of thy bones in hell. O trifle not any longer with God, and that in such serious matters as these are?

And now I have done my endeavour to give your former mercies and promises a resurrection in your consciences. O that you would sit down and pause a while upon these things, and then reflect upon the past mercies of your lives, and on what hath passed betwixt God and your souls in your former straits and troubles? Let not these plain words work upon thy spleen, and make thee say as the widow of Sarepta did to the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 18. "What have I "to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my "sin to remembrance?" But rather let it work kindly on thy heart, and make thee say as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. "Bles-

" sed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet " me; and blessed be thy advice."

CAUTION V.

THE fifth and last danger I shall warn you of, is your contempt and slighting of death. Ah! how little a matter do many of you, at least in words, make of it? It seems you have light reverential fear of this king of terrors, not only that you speak slightly of it, but also because you make no more preparations for it, and are no more sensible of your preservations and deliverances from it. Indeed the heathen philosophers did many of them profess a contempt of death upon the account of wisdom and fortitude; and they were accounted the bravest men that most despised and slighted it: But, alas, poor souls! they saw not their enemy against whom they fought, but skirmished with their eyes shut; they saw indeed its pale face, but not its sting and dart. There is also a lawful contempt of death. We freely grant that in two cases a believer may contemn it. *First*, When it is propounded to them a temptation on purpose to scare them from Christ and duty, then they should slight it; as Rev. xii. 11. " They loved not their lives unto the death." *Secondly*, When the natural evil of death is set in competition with the enjoyment of God in glory, then a believer should despise it, as Christ is said to do, Heb. xii. 2. though his was a shameful death. But upon all other accounts and considerations, it is the height of stupidity and security to despise it.

Now, to the end that you might have right thoughts and apprehensions of death, which may put you upon serious preparation for it; and that whenever your turn comes to conflict with this king of terrors, under whose hand the Pompeys, Cæsars, and Alexanders of the world, who have been the terrors of nations, have bowed down themselves; I say, that when your turn and time comes, as the Lord only knows how soon it may be, you may escape the stroke of its dart and sting, and taste no other bitterness in death, than the natural evil of it: To this end I have drawn the following questions and answers, which, if you please, may be called *The Seaman's Catechism*. And, oh! that you might not dare to launch forth into the deeps, until you have seriously interrogated and examined your hearts upon those particulars. Oh! that you would resolve, before you go forth, to withdraw yourselves a while from all clamours and distractions, and calmly and seriously catechise your ownselves in this manner.

Quest. 1. What may the issue of this voyage be?

Answ. Death, Prov. xxvii. 1. " Boast not thyself of to-morrow, " for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Jam. iv. 13, 14. " Go to now, ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into " such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get " gain: whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow; for " what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little " time, and then vanisheth away."

Quest. 2. What is death?

Answ. Death is a separation of soul and body until the resurrection, 2 Cor. v. 1. "We know that if our earthly house of this taber-"nacle be dissolved." Job xiv. 10, 11, 12. Read the words.

Quest. 3. Is death to be despised and slighted if it be so?

Answ. O no! it is one of the most weighty and serious things that ever a creature went about: so dreadful doth it appear to some, that the fear of it subjects them to bondage all their lives, Heb. ii. 15. "And to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their "life-time subject to bondage." And in scripture it is called, *The king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. Or the black prince, as some translate. Never had any prince such a title before. To some it hath been so terrible, that none might mention its name before them.

Quest. 4. What makes it so terrible and affrighting to men?

Answ. Several things concur to make it terrible to the most of men; as, *first*, Its harbingers and antecedents, which are strong pains, conflicts, and agonies. *Secondly*, Its office and work it comes about, which is to transfer us into the other world. Hence, Rev. vi. 8. it is set forth by a *pale horse:* an horse for its use and office to carry you away from hence into the upper, or lower region of eternity; and a pale horse, for its ghastliness and terror. *Thirdly*, But above all, it is terrible in regard of its consequence; for it is the door of eternity, the parting point betwixt the present world and that to come; the utmost line and boundary of all temporal things. Hence, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but "after this the judgment." Rev. vi. 8. "And I looked, and be-"hold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and "hell followed him." Ah! it makes a sudden and strange alteration upon men's conditions, to be plucked out of house, and from among friends and honours, and so many delights, and hurried in a moment into the land of darkness, to be clothed with flames, and drink the pure wrath of the Almighty for ever. This is it that makes it terrible.

Quest. 5. If death be so weighty a matter, am I prepared to die?

Answ. I doubt not; I am afraid I want many things that are necessary to a due preparation for it.

Quest. 6. What are those things wherein a due preparation for death consisteth?

Answ. Many things are necessary. *First*, Special and saving union with Jesus Christ. This is that which disarms it of its sting: "O "death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who hath given [us] "the victory, through [our] Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. So John xi. 26. "Whosoever [liveth,] and [believeth] in me shall "never die." Whosoever liveth, i. e. is quickened with a new spiritual life and principle, and so puts forth the principal act of that life, viz. faith, he shall never die, i. e. eternally. This hornet, death, shall never leave its sting in his sides. *Secondly*, To entertain

death comfortably, the evidence and knowledge of this union is necessary, 2 Cor. v. 1. "For [we know,] that if our earthly house of "this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God," &c. And then he cannot only be content, but groan to be unclothed, ver. 2. A mistake in the former will cost me my soul; and a mistake here will lose me my peace and comfort. *Thirdly*, In order to this evidence it is necessary that I keep a good conscience in all things both towards God and man, 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, "even the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly "sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have "had our conversation in the world." This good conscience respects all and every part of our work and duty to be done, and all and every sin to be renounced and denied: so that he that is early united unto Christ by faith, hath the clear evidence of that union; and the evidence fairly gathered from the testimony of a good conscience, witnessing his faithfulness, as to all duties to be done, and sins to be avoided, he is fit to die; death can do him no harm; but, alas! these things are not to be found in me.

Quest. 7. But what if I die without such a preparation as this is? What will the consequence of that be?

Answ. Very terrible, even the separation of my soul and body from the Lord to all eternity; John iii. 36. "He that believeth on "the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, "shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." *He shall not see life;* there is the privative part of his misery, separation from the blessed God. *And the* [*wrath,*] mark it, not anger, but wrath, not the wrath of man, but of [God,] at whose rebukes the mountains skip like frighted men, and the hills tremble: the wrath of God not only flashes out upon him, as a transient flash of lightning, but [*abideth,*] dwells, sticks fast; there is no power in the world can loose the soul from it. [*Upon him,*] not the body only, nor the soul only, but on [*him,*] *(i. e.)* the whole person, the whole man. Here is the principal positive part of that man's misery.

Quest. 8. Can I bear this misery?

Answ. No: my heart cannot endure, nor my hands be strong, when God shall have to do with me upon this account. I cannot bear his wrath; angels could not bear it; it hath sunk them into the depths of misery. Those that feel but a few sparks of it in their consciences here, are even distracted by it, Psalm lxxxviii. 15. Christ himself had never borne up under it, had it not been supported by the infinite power of the divine nature, Isa. xliii. 1. "Behold my Ser- "vant whom I uphold." How then shall I live, when God doth this? what will be done in the dry tree? Oh! there is no abiding of it, it is insufferable! "The sinners in Zion are afraid: trembling "surprizeth the hypocrite: who among us shall dwell with the de- "vouring fire? Who can endure the everlasting burning?" Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Quest. 9. If it cannot be borne, is there any way to prevent it?

Answ. Yes, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. And herein I am in better case than the damned; I have the [*may be's*] of mercy, and they have not. Oh! what would they give for a possibility of salvation? Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. "Wash ye, make you clean, "put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to "do evil, learn to do well," *&c.* "Come now, let us reason together: and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow." Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will "have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon." Though my disease be dangerous, it is not desperate, it doth not scorn a remedy. Oh! there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. There is yet a possibility, not only of recovering my primitive glory, but to be set in a better case than ever Adam was.

Quest. 10. How may that be?

Answ. By going to the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 1. "There "is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, Who is he that "condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen "again."

Quest. 11. But what is it to go to Christ?

Answ. To go to Christ, is to * embrace him in his † person and ‡ offices, and to rest § entirely and closely upon him for ‖ pardon of sin, and ** eternal life: being deeply †† sensible of the want and worth of him. John i. 12. "To as many as [received] him, he gave "power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed "on his name." John iii. 36. "He that believeth [on the Son] "hath life." 1 Cor. i. 30. "And of him are ye in Christ Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification "and redemption." Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in "any other," *&c.* Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that believe are "[justified from all things,] from which ye could not be justified by "the law of Moses." Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye "saved." Acts ii. 37. "Now when they heard this they were "pricked to the heart," *&c.*

Quest. 12. But will Christ receive me, if I go to him?

Answ. Yes, yes; he is more ready to receive thee, than thou art to come to him; Luke xv. 20. "And he arose, and came to his father: but, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, "and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and "kissed him." The son doth but go, the father ran; if he had but received him into the house, it had been much; but he fell on his

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* John i. 12. † John iii. 36. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30. § Acts iv. 12.
‖ Acts xiii. 39. ** Isa. xlv. 22. †† Acts ii. 37.

neck, and kissed him. He bespeaks him, much after that rate he expressed himself to returning Ephraim: "My bowels are troubled "for him; I will surely have mercy on him," Jer. xxxi. 20. There is not the least parenthesis in all the pages of free-grace, to exclude a soul that is sincerely willing to come to Christ.

Quest. 13. But how may it appear that he is willing to receive me?

Answ. Make trial of him thyself. If thou didst but know his heart to poor sinners, you would not question it. Believe what he saith in the gospel; there thou shalt find that he is a willing Saviour; for therein thou hast, first, his most serious invitations, Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden." Isa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters." These serious invitations are, secondly, backed and confirmed with an oath, Ezek. xxxv. 11. "As I live, I desire not the death of a sinner." Thirdly, Amplified with pathetical wishes, sighs and groans, Luke xix. 42. "Oh! that thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this "thy day." Fourthly, Yea, delivered unto them in undissembled tears, Mat. xxiii. 37, 38. "He wept over it, and said, O Jerusalem, "Jerusalem!" Fifthly, Nay, he hath shed not only tears, but blood, to convince thee of his willingness. View him in his dying posture upon the cross, stretching out his dying arms to gather thee, hanging down his blessed head to kiss thee; every one of his wounds was a mouth opened to convince thee of the abundant willingness of Christ to receive thee.

Quest. 14. But my sins are dyed in grain: I am a sinner of the blackest hue: will he receive and pardon such an one?

Answ. Yea, soul, if thou be willing to commit thyself to him: Isa. i. 18. "Come now, let us reason together; though your sins be as "scarlet, I will make them as snow; though they be red like crim-"son, I will make them as wool."

Quest. 15. This is comfortable news; but may I not delay my closing with him for a while, and yet not hazard my eternal happiness, seeing I resolve to come to him at last?

Answ. No; there must be no delays in this case: Psal. cxix. 60. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

Quest. 16. Why may I not defer it, at least for a little while?

Answ. For many weighty reasons this work can bear no delays. First, The offers of grace are made to the present time, Heb. iii. 15. "Whilst it is said to-day, harden not your hearts." There may be a few more days of God's patience, but that is unknown to thee. 2. Your life is immediate uncertain; how many thousands are gone into eternity since the last night? If you can say to sickness when it comes, Go, and come again another time, it were somewhat. 3. Sin is not a thing to be dallied with. Oh, who would be willing to lie down one night under the guilt of all his sins? 4. Delays increase the difficulty of conversion; sin still roots itself deeper; habits

are the more strengthened, and the heart still more hardened. 5. There be thousands now in hell, that perished through delays; their consciences often urged and pressed hard upon them, and many resolutions they had, as thou hast now; but they were never perfected by answerable executions, and so they perished. 6. Thy way of sinning now is desperate; for every moment thou art acting against clear light and conviction; and that is a dreadful way of sinning. 7. There can be no solid reason for one hour's delay; for thou canst not be happy too soon; and be sure of it, if ever thou come to taste of the sweetness of a Christian life, nothing will more pierce and grieve thee than this, that thou enjoyedst it no sooner.

Quest. 17. Oh, but the pleasures of sin engage me to it; how shall I break these cords and snares?

Answ. That snare may be broken by considering solemnly these five things. 1. That to take pleasure in sin, is an argument of a most deplorable and wretched state of soul. What a poisonous nature doth it argue in a toad, that is sucking in nothing but poison and filth where-ever it crawls! O what an heart hast thou! Hast thou nothing to find pleasure in but that which makes the Spirit of Christ sad, and the hearts of saints ake and groan, which digged hell, and let in endless miseries upon the world? 2. Think that the misery it involves thee in is infinitely beyond the delights it tempts thee by: it doth but delight the sensual part, and that but with a brutish pleasure, but will torment thy immortal soul, and that for ever. The pleasure will quickly go off, but the sting will remain behind. "I tasted but a little honey on the top of my rod, (said "Jonathan) and I must die," 1 Sam. xiv. 43. 3. Nay, that is not all; but the Lord proportions wrath according to the pleasures souls have had in sin, Rev. xviii. 7. "How much she hath lived deliciously, "so much torment and sorrow give unto her." 4. What dost thou pay, or at least pawn for this pleasure? Thy soul, thy precious soul is laid to stake for it; and, in effect, thus thou sayest when thou deferrest the closing with Christ upon the account of enjoying the pleasures of sin a little longer: Here, devil, take my soul into thy possession and power: if I repent, I will have it again; if not, it is thine for ever. O dear-bought pleasures!

What is the world? A great exchange of ware,
Wherein all sorts and sexes cheapning are;
The flesh the devil sit and cry—what lack ye?
When most they fawn, they most intend to rack ye.
The wares are cups of joy and beds of pleasure;
There's godly choice, down weight, and flowing measure.
A soul's the price, but they give time to pay,
Upon the death-bed, or the dying-day.
Hard is the bargain, and unjust the measure,
When as the price so much out-lasts the pleasure.

QUARLES.

Lastly, It is thy gross mistake to think thou shalt be bereaved of all delights and pleasures by coming under the government of Christ: for one of those things in which his kingdom consists, is joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. Indeed it allows no sinful pleasures to the subjects of it, nor do they need it; but from the day thou closest in with Christ, all thy pure, real, and eternal pleasures and delights begin to bear date. When the prodigal was returned to his father, then, saith the text, "They began to be merry," Luke xv. 24. See Acts viii. 5, 6. No, soul, thou shalt want no joy, for the scripture saith, "They shall be abundantly satisfied "with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of "the river of thy pleasures; for with thee is the fountain of life," &c. Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

Quest. 18. But how shall I be able to undergo the severities of religion? There are difficult duties to be done, and an heavy cross to be taken up; these be the things that daunt me.

Answ. If pain and suffering daunt thee, how is it thou art not more out of love with sin than with religion? For it is most certain, that the sufferings for Christ are nothing to hell, the just reward and certain issue of sin; the pains of mortification are nothing to the pains of damnation: there is no comparison betwixt suffering for Christ, and suffering from Christ; Matth. v. 29. "If thy right hand or eye "offend thee, cut it off, and pluck it out; it is profitable for thee "that one member suffer, than that the whole body be cast into hell." Secondly, Thou seest the worst, but not the best of Christ. There be joys and comforts in those difficult duties and sufferings, that thou seest not; Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings." Jam. i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers tempta-"tions," &c. Thirdly, Great shall be thy assistance from Christ, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through him that strengthens me "The Spirit helps our infirmities," takes the other end of the burden, Rom. viii. 26. What meanest thou to stand upon such terms, when it is heaven or hell, eternal life or death that lie before thee?

Quest. 19. But to what purpose will my endeavours to come to Christ be, unless I be elected? All will be to no purpose.

Answ. True; If thou be not elected, thou canst not obtain him, or happiness by him: but yet that is no discouragement to strive: for in thy unconverted state, thy election or non-election is a secret to thee: the only way to make it sure is by striving and giving all diligence in the way of duty, 2 Pet. i. 10. And if you ponder the text well, you will find, that election is not only made sure in the way of diligence and striving, but calling is put before it, and lies in order to it: first secure thy effectual calling, and then thine election.

Quest. 20. But I have no strength of my own to come to Christ by: and is it not absurd to urge me upon impossibilities in order to my salvation?

Answ. First, Certainly you are most absurd in pleading and pretending your impotence against your duty; for you do think you have a power to come to Christ, else how do you quiet your conscience with promises and resolves of conversion hereafter? Secondly, Though it be true, that no saving act can be done without the concurrence of special grace; yet this is as true, that thy inability to do what is above thy power, doth not excuse thee from doing what is in thy power to do. Canst thou not forbear, at least, many external acts of sin? And canst thou not perform, at least, the external acts of duty? Oh! if thou canst not come to Christ, yet, as the blind man, lie in the way of Christ: do what thou canst do, and confess and bewail thy impotency, that thou canst do no more. Canst thou not take thy soul aside in secret, and thus bemoan it; my poor soul! what wilt thou do? O what will become of thee, thou art christless, covenantless, hopeless, and, which is most sad, senseless and bowelless? oh! thou canst not bear the infinite wrath of the eternal God, whose Almighty power will be set on work to torment such as thou art; and yet thou takest no course to prevent it! Thou seest the busy diligence of all others, and how the kingdom of heaven suffers violence by them: and art not thou as deeply engaged to look to thy own happiness as any in the world? Will hell be more tolerable to thee than others? O what a composition of stupidity and sloth art thou: Thou livest after such a rate, as if there were neither fire in hell to torment thee, nor glory in heaven to reward thee. If God and Christ, heaven and hell, were but dreams and fables, thou couldst not be less affected with them. Ah, my soul! my soul! my precious soul! Is it easy to perish? Wilt thou die as a fool dieth? O that men would but do this if they can do no more!

And now, soul, you see what death that is you have made so light of; and what is the only way that we poor sons of death have to escape its sting. You have here seen the vanity of all your pleas and pretences against conversion, and the way to Christ prepared and cast up for you. Now sirs, I beg you, in the name of God that made you, and as if I made this request upon my bended knees to you, that you will now, without any more delays, yield yourselves to the Lord. Soul, I beseech thee, haste thee into thy chamber, shut thy door, and bespeak the Lord after some such manner as this before thou darest to launch out into the deeps again.

O dreadful and glorious Majesty! thou hast bowels of mercy, as well as beams of glory: I have heard the sounding of these bowels for me this day. Lord, I have now heard a representation of the grim and ghastly face of death: ah, I have now seen it as the king of terrors, as the door of eternity, as the parting point where sinners take their eternal farewell of all their delights: I have seen this black prince mounted on his pale horse, and hell following him: I have been convinced this day, that if he should come and fetch away my soul in that condition it is, hell would follow him indeed.

Lord, I have now heard of the Prince of life also, in whose bleeding side death hath left and lost its envenomed sting; so that though it may kill, yet it cannot hurt any of his members. To this glorious Redeemer I have now been invited; all my pretences against him have been confuted, and my soul, in his name, assured of welcome, if I come unto him, and cast myself upon him. And now, Lord, I come, I come, upon thy call and invitation; I am unfeignedly willing to avouch thee this day to be my God, and to take thee for my portion. Lord Jesus! I come unto thee; thy clay, thy creature moves towards the Fountain of pity: look hitherto, behold a spectacle of misery. Bowels of mercy, hear! behold my naked soul, not a rag of righteousness to cover it; behold my starving soul, not a bit of bread for it to eat: ah! it has fed upon wind and vanity hitherto. Behold my wounded soul bleeding at thy foot; every part, head and heart, will and affections, all wounded by sin. O thou compassionate Samaritan! turn aside, and pour thy sovereign blood into these bleeding wounds, which, like so many opened mouths, plead for pity. Behold a returning, submitting rebel, willing to lay down the weapons of unrighteousness, and to come upon the knee for a pardon. Oh, I am weary of the service of sin, I can endure it no longer! Lord Jesus, thou wast anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; come now, and knock off those fetters of unbelief: O set my soul at liberty that it may praise thee! For so many years Satan hath cruelly tyrannized over me. O that this might be the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the salvation of my God! Lord, thou wast lifted up to draw men unto thee; and indeed thou art a drawing Saviour, a lovely Jesus! I have hitherto slighted thee, but it was because I did not know thee: mine eyes have been held by unbelief, when thou wast opened in the gospel; but now I see thee as the chiefest of ten thousands. Thou art the glory of heaven, the glory of earth, the glory of Sion; and, oh! that thou wouldst be the glory of my soul! I confess I am not worthy thou shouldst look upon me; I may much rather expect to be trampled under the feet of justice, than to be embraced in thine arms of mercy: and that thou shouldst rather shed my polluted blood, than sprinkle thine own upon me. But, Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou pursue a dried leaf; Shall it ever be said that the merciful King of heaven hanged up a poor soul that put the rope about his own neck, and so came self-condemningly to him for mercy! O, my Lord, I am willing to submit to any terms, be they never so hard and ungrateful to the flesh: I am sure whatever I shall suffer in thy service cannot be like to what I have suffered, or am like to suffer by sin; henceforth be thou my Lord and Master; thy service is perfect freedom; be thou my priest and prophet, my wisdom and righteousness. I resign up myself unto thee; my poor soul with all its faculties, my body with all its members, to be living instruments

of thy glory. Let *holiness to the Lord* be now written upon them all, let my tongue henceforth plead for thee, my hands be lifted up unto thy testimonies, my feet walk in thy ways: O let all my affections, as willing servants, wait upon thee, and be active for thee. Whatever I am, let me be for thee; whatever I have, let it be thine; whatever I can do, let me do for thee; whatever I can suffer, let me suffer for thee. O that I might say, before I go hence, my beloved is mine, and I am his! O that what I have begged on earth might be ratified in heaven! my spirit within me, saith, *Amen.* Lord Jesus, say thou, *Amen.*

THE

SEAMAN'S COMPANION:

Wherein the Mysteries of Providence, relating to SEAMEN, are opened; their Sins and Dangers discovered; their Duties pressed, and their several Troubles and Burdens relieved.

In six practicable and suitable SERMONS.

To all Masters, Mariners, and Seamen; especially such as belong to the Port of Dartmouth, and the Parts adjacent.

SIRS,

YOUR ready acceptation of my former labours for you, hath encouraged this second and last endeavour of mine this way to serve you. I have for many years been convinced of the great use and need you have of the following discourses: But the motives that quickened me to their publication at this time, were especially these two:

First, The hand of the Lord hath gone forth with terror against you; this winter many of your companions are gone down to the bottom. Such a doleful account of shipwrecks from every coast, and such sad lamentations as have been heard in almost every maritime town, cannot but deeply affect every heart with sorrow and compassion, and hath engaged me in this service for the remnant that is left.

Secondly, The seasonable and prudent care his Majesty hath at this time manifested for the regulation and preservation of your Newland trade, and encouragement of your honest industry therein, hath also provoked me to hasten this design, for the regulation of your lives and manners, without which all external means will signify but little to your true prosperity.

This little manual contains the sum of your duty in the several parts

of your employments, and faithfully discovers the temptations and dangers attending you in them all. Upon which consideration it is fitly entitled, *The Seaman's Companion.*

As God hath cast my lot among you, so he hath inclined my heart studiously to promote your welfare. I have been, by long observation, convinced, that one principal cause of your miscarriages, is the neglect of God in your outsets. Did you pray more, you might expect to prosper better. Indeed, if that Epicurean doctrine were true, that God concerns not himself about the affairs of this lower world, but leaves all things to be swayed by the power of natural causes, your neglect of prayer might be more excusable: But, whilst successes and disappointments depend upon his pleasure, it cannot but be the most direct course you can steer to ruin all, to forget and neglect God in your enterprizes. To cure this evil, and prevent the manifold mischiefs that follow it, the first sermon is designed. And if the Lord shall bless it to your conviction and reformation, I may then comfortably apply the words of Moses to you, Deut. xxxiii. 18. "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out."

You often hear the terrible voice of God in the storms; and are at your wit's end, not knowing what course to take, nor which way to turn for safety and comfort: And yet how soon are all those impressions worn off? and those mercies which (whilst new) were so affecting, after a few days become stale and common. I have, therefore, in the second sermon, laboured not only to direct and support you in those straits, but have also endeavoured to fix the sense of those providences upon your hearts, and instruct you how to make due improvements of them, by answering the several aims and designs of them.

It hath been much upon my heart, to what and how many temptations to sin you are exposed in foreign countries, where lawful remedies are absent, alluring objects present, and temptations exceedingly strengthened upon you, by hopes of secresy and concealment: And, indeed, for a man whose heart is not thoroughly seasoned with religion, and awed by the fear of God, to converse in such places, and with such company, and not be polluted with their sins, is, upon the matter, as great a miracle, as for the three children to come out of the fiery furnace without an hair singed, or the smell of fire upon their garments. I have therefore prepared for you the best preservative from these temptations in the third sermon, which the Lord make an effectual antidote to your souls against the corruptions that are in the world through lust.

I have frequently observed the mischievous influence that success and prosperity have had upon some of you: How the God of your mercies hath been forgotten, and his mercies made instruments of sin against him: How apt are men to ascribe all to their own wisdom, care and industry, as if God had no hand in it? The *fourth sermon* therefore leads up your thoughts to the fountain of all your good,

and drops many very seasonable and necessary cautions upon you, to keep you humble and thankful under prosperity.

And because men will not own God in their success, but sacrifice to their own net; God often teaches them the evil of it, by sad losses and disappointments: Yea, disappointments sometimes follow the best of men, and that in the most just and honest employments. To caution the former sort, and support the latter in such a case, I recommend the *fifth sermon* to your serious consideration, not doubting, if the blessing of God go forth with it, but it may prove a very seasonable and useful discourse to you in that condition.

And, lastly, because it is so common for seamen to forget the many mercies they have received in a voyage, when it is over, and God hath brought them to the havens of desire, and among their relations, I have, in the *last sermon*, instructed them in their duty, and laboured to work in such a sense of mercies upon their hearts, as may engage them to a due and thankful acknowledgment of God in all.

You see, by this brief account, how honest the design is in which I have engaged for you. But I am sensible, that the management is very defective, it being dispatched in haste, and when my hands were filled with other work, and my body clogged with many infirmities. But, such as it is, I heartily devote it to the special service of your souls, and remain

Yours, in all Christian service,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Dartmouth, Jan. 21, 1675.

THE

SEAMAN's FAREWELL.

SERMON I.

Acts xxi. 5, 6. *And we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship, and they returned home again.*

THIS scripture gives us an account of the manner of Paul's embarking at Tyre, in his voyage for Jerusalem; and therein an excellent pattern for all that go down into the seas, to do business in the great waters. It is true, his business, in that voyage, was not to get an estate, but to witness to the truths of Jesus Christ with the hazard of his life. Many discouragements he met with in this voyage,

and not the least at Tyre, where he met with certain disciples that said to him, by the Spirit, that he should not go to Jerusalem, though, in that, they followed their own spirit; but he is not to be dissuaded: Like that noble Roman *, and upon a more noble account, 'he judged it necessary to go, but not to live.' The disciples seeing his unalterable resolution, express their affections to him at parting, by bringing him to the ship, and that with their whole families, wives and children, ver. 5. therein giving him the last mark of their dear respects.

In the farewell, their Christian affections are mutually manifested by two sorts of actions,—*viz. Sacred* and *Civil*—in prayers and salutations.

1. Prayers; the best office one Christian can do to another. As prayer is the best preface, so certainly it is the best close to any business or enjoyment: In which prayer we may note the place, posture, and matter or scope.

First, The place; it was upon the *shore*, the parting place near to which the ship rode, waiting for Paul: And this was no unusual thing among them in those days. Tertullian † tells us, "they sent their prayers to heaven from every shore;" and elsewhere, he calls them, *orationes littorales*, "shore prayers." So customary it was for holy men, in those days, to be taken into the ship or boat from their knees, not from the tavern or ale-house.

Secondly, The posture; "They kneeled down." As all places, so all postures have been used in prayer. Some have used one posture, and some another; but this is the common and ordinary posture: Knees when they can (as an ingenious author speaks) then they must be bowed.

Thirdly, The matter and scope of the prayer, which though it be not expressed, yet may with great probability be argued from the place and occasion, to be, as Erasmus speaks, *Pro fausta Navigatione*, for a prosperous voyage, and divine protection. He knew to what, and how many hazards of life they are hourly exposed, that border so near unto death, as mariners and passengers at sea do; and therefore would not commit himself to the sea, until first he had solemnly committed himself to God, whose voice the winds and seas obey: Nor was he willing to take his leave of his friends, until he had poured out his heart to God with them, and for them, whose faces he might never see again in this world, and engaged their prayers also for him.

2. As their affections were mutually manifested by this *sacred* action, *prayer*; so by *civil* ones too, affectionate embraces and *salutations*. "When we had taken our leave one of another." Salutations were

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* *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam.* Cæsar.

† *Per omne littus preces ad cœlum mittunt.* Tertul. de Jejun.

used among the Jews, both at their meeting and parting. This latter consisted in words and gestures; the usual words were, "The "Lord bless you," Ruth ii. 4. "Peace be unto thee. Grace be "with you," *&c.* The gestures were kissing each other. These were kisses which a Cato might give, and a Vestal receive. In both these, *viz.* their prayers for, and salutations of, each other, they manifested their Christian affections mutually, but especially by their prayers at parting. Hence note,

Doct. *Those that undertake voyages by sea, had need not only to pray earnestly themselves, but also to engage the prayers of other Christians for them.*

They that part praying, may hope to meet again rejoicing; and those designs which are not prefaced with prayer, cannot wind up with a blessing. There are two sorts of prayer, *stated* and *occasional.*

Stated prayer is our conversing with God, either publicly, privately, or secretly, at the constant seasons allotted for it, in the returns of every week and day.

Occasional, is the Christian's address to God at any time upon extraordinary emergencies, and calls of providence; or, when we undertake any solemn business, (and what more solemn than this?) and then the chief matter and scope of prayer is to be suited to the present occasion and design in hand; of this sort is that I am here to speak. Now in opening the point, I will shew,

(1.) What those special mercies are that seamen should pray for, when they are to undertake a voyage.

(2.) What influence prayer hath upon those mercies, and how it must be qualified for that end.

(3.) What aid and assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the procurement of them.

And then make application of all.

(1.) We will inform the seamen, what those special mercies are, he should earnestly pray for, when he undertakes a voyage.

And amongst those mercies to be earnestly requested of God by him, the first and principal is, *the pardon of sin;* a mercy which must make a part of every prayer, and at this time to be earnestly sued for. Guilt is that Jonah in the ship, for whose sake storms, shipwrecks, and ruin pursue it. It is said, Psal. cxlviii. 8. "That "the stormy winds fulfil God's word." If the word there spoken of be the word of God's threatening against sin, as some expound it, then the stormy winds and lofty waves, are God's *serjeants* sent out with commission to arrest sinners upon the sea, his water-bailiffs to execute the threatenings of God upon them, in the great deeps. Hence those expressions of scripture, Num. xxxii. 23. "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and Gen. iv. 7. "Sin lieth at the door." In both which places the Spirit of God compares a man's guilt to a blood-hound, that pursues and

follows upon the scent wherever a man goes. And indeed our sins are called *debts*, Matth. vi. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to sin against him; but *metonymically*, because as pecuniary debts oblige him to suffer that hath not wherewith to pay, and expose him to the danger of serjeants and bailiffs wherever he shall be found; so do our sins, in reference to God, who hath reckoned with many thousands of sinners upon the sea, there arrested them by his winds and waves which he sent out after them, and laid their bodies in the bottom of the sea, and their souls in the bottom of hell. Oh! that is a dismal storm, that is sent after a man, to drive soul and body to destruction! with what heart or courage can that man go down into the deeps, and expose himself among the raging waves and roaring winds, that knows God hath a controversy with him; and for ought he knows, the next storm may be sent to hurry him to the judgment-seat of the great and terrible God? Certainly, friends, it is your great concern to get a pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing so indispensable, that you cannot have less; and so comprehensive, that you cannot desire more. If sin be pardoned, you are safe, you need fear no storms within, whatever you find without: But woe to him that finds at once a raging sea, and a roaring conscience; trouble without, and terror within; ship and hope sinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedness of your hearts and lives. You know what treasures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when distresses and extremities come upon you, conscience will be as quiet and still as it is now? No, no, guilt will fly in your faces then, and stop your mouths. O therefore humble yourselves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply yourselves to the blood of sprinkling; pray and plead with God for remission of sin; without which you are in a woeful case to adventure yourselves at sea to those imminent perils of life.

(2.) Another mercy you are earnestly to pray for is, That the *presence* of God may go with you, I mean not his *general presence*, which fills the world; that will be with you, whether you pray for it or no; but his *gracious special presence*, which was that Moses so earnestly sued for in Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy presence go not "with me, carry us not hence." He and the people were now in a waste howling wilderness, but bound for Canaan, that earthly paradise; yet you see he chuses rather to be in a *wilderness* with God, than in a Canaan without him; and no wonder, for this gracious presence of God, as to *comfort*, is all that a gracious soul hath, or desires to have in this world; and as to security and protection from dangers, it is the only *asylum*, sanctuary, and refuge in the day of trouble. If the presence of God be graciously with us, it will guard the heart against terror in the most imminent distress, as you see, Psal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the

" shadow of death * i. e. (through the most apparent and imminent " dangers of death), yet will I fear no evil for thou art with me." And indeed there is no room for fear; for with whomsoever God is in a gracious and special mauner present, these three matchless mercies are secured to that man.

First, That God's special providence shall watch over him in all dangers, Psal. xci. 1,—4. " He shall abide under the shadow of the " Almighty; he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his " wings shalt thou trust." As the hen gathers her brood under her wings, not only to cherish, but to defend them from all danger, so God takes his people under his providential wings for their security.

Secondly, He appoints for them a guard of angels, whose office is to watch over, and minister to them in all their straits. So we read, Psal. xci. 11. " He shall give his angels charge over thee to " keep thee in all thy ways." Many invisible services they do for us. Luther tells us the angels have two offices,—*Superius canere, et inferius vigilare;*—to sing above, and watch below. These are as a life guard to that man with whom the Lord is.

Thirdly, He readily hears their cries in a day of distress, and is with them to save and deliver them. So ver. 15. " He shall call upon " me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will " deliver him, and honour him." O what a matchless mercy is this! how many times, when poor seamen have seen death apparently before their eyes, have they cried, *mercy! mercy!* How ordinary is it for their eyes, on such occasions, to add salt-water, where alas, there was too much before? But now to have God with you in such an hour of straits, to hear, support, and deliver you: O you cannot estimate the worth of such a mercy! Pray therefore, for it is a mercy indispensably necessary for you; and say to him, as Moses, " Lord, if thy presence may not go with us, carry us not hence."

(3.) A third mercy you are specially concerned to beg of God, is, that you may be kept from the temptations to sin you will meet with when you are abroad in the world. The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its snares and temptations attending it: And you know you have corrupt natures, as much disposed to close with temptations as tinder is to catch fire: So that unless the preventing, restraining, and mortifying grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. If there were no devil to tempt you externally; yet such a corrupt heart meeting with a suitable temptation and occasion, is enough to overcome you; Jam. i. 14. " Every man is tempted when he is drawn " away of his own lusts, and enticed." Alas! you know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the success and prosperity of your affairs, be it never so great, if you return with consciences polluted and wounded with sin.

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* *Quamvis in summa mortis ipsius pericula incurram.* Gloss. Philol. Sacr.

He that brings home a pack of fine clothes, infected with the plague, hath no such great bargain of it, how cheap soever he purchased them. O therefore beg earnestly of God that you may be kept from sin: pray that you be not led into temptation.

(4) Pray for *divine protection* in all the dangers and hazards to which you shall be exposed. You know not how soon your life and estate shall be in jeopardy: This night you may sleep quietly in your cabin, to-morrow you may be tugging at the pump, and the next night take up your lodging upon a cold rock. How smartly doth the apostle James reprehend the security of trading persons; Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such "a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; "whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is "your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and "then vanisheth away." How easily can God dash all your designs, and hopeful projects in one hour! You know you are every moment as near death as you are near the water, which is but a remove of one or two inches. How poor a defence is the strongest ship against the lofty seas and lurking rocks? How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the most skilful navigator cannot foresee or prevent?

They are, as the Psalmist speaks, at their wit's end, Psal. cvii. 27. But O how secure and safe amidst all dangers, is that man whom the Lord takes into his special protection? And he will not shut out those that sincerely commit themselves to him: The winds and seas obey his voice: he can with a word turn the storm into a calm, Psal. cvii. 29. or order means for your preservation, when you seem lost to the eye of sense and reason. I have heard of a young man, that being in a great storm at sea, was observed to be very cheerful, when all the rest were as dead men; and being asked the reason of his cheerfulness in a case of so much danger? He replied, 'Truly, I 'have no cause to fear, for the pilot of the ship is my father.' O it is an unspeakable comfort when a man hath committed himself unto the hands of God, as a Father, and trusted him over *all!*

(5.) Pray for counsel and direction in all your affairs and undertakings, and lean not to your own understandings. "I know, O Lord, "(saith the prophet) that the way of man is not in himself, neither is "it in him that walks, to direct his own steps," Jer. x. 23. Undertake nothing without asking God's leave and counsel. How many that have stronger heads than you, have miserably ruined themselves and their designs by trusting to their own prudence? "A man's "heart (saith Solomon) deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his "steps," Prov. xvi. 9. We must still preserve the power of God's providence, saith one; * God would not have us too carnally confi-

* Manton on Jude. It is a robbery to use goods without the owner's leave. We forget to bid ourselves good speed, when we do not acknowledge God's dominion. This is but a piece of religious manners.

dent. The Lord can blast your enterprize, though managed with never so much wisdom and contrivance. You are not only to look to God as the *author* of *success*, but as the *director* and *guide* of the *action*. It is by his conduct and blessing, that all things come to pass. If your designs succeed not, you are presently ready to ascribe it to ill fortune, and say, you had bad luck; when indeed you ruined it yourselves, in the first moulding it, by undertaking it without asking counsel of God: "In all thy ways acknowledge him," Prov. iii. 6.

(6.) Pray for success upon your lawful employments and designs, and own it to be from the Lord. You have an excellent pattern in Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord God of Abraham thy "servant, send me good speed this day." He reverences the sovereignty of providence, and acknowledges success to be a flower of the imperial crown, and the bridle that God hath upon the reasonable creature, to dispose of the success of human affairs. I look on that business or design in a fair and hopeful way to prosper, wherein we have engaged God to be with us, by asking his counsel, and recommending the success to his blessing. These are the mercies you are to pray for.

Secondly, Next I will shew you what influence prayer hath into those mercies you are to pray for; and it hath much every way. To be short, it hath a threefold influence into them.

(1.) It is a proper and effectual mean to obtain and procure them. God will have every thing fetched out by prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for "them." God gives not our mercies for prayers, nor will he give them without our prayers. This is the stated method in which our mercies are conveyed to us; and therein the wisdom and goodness of God are eminently discovered. His wisdom in making us to see the Author of every mercy in the way of receiving it, and securing his own glory in the dispensing of every mercy: His *goodness* to us in sweetening every mercy this way to us, and raising its value in our estimation. Prayer coming between our wants and supplies is a singular mean to raise the price of mercies with us, and engage us to due improvements of them. So that is an idle pretence for any to say, God knows our wants, whether we pray or not; and if mercies be decreed for us, we shall have them, though we ask them not: for though God knows our wants, yet he will have us to know them too, and sensibly to feel the need of mercy. And though prayer be altogether needless to his *information*, yet it is very necessary to testify our submission; And though it is true, if God have decreed mercy for us, we shall have it; yet it is not true, that therefore we need not to pray for it: For decrees exclude not the second means, nor render the creature's duty unnecessary. "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith "the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expect-"ed end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray "unto me, and I will hearken unto you," Jee. xxix. 11, 12. So that

it is plain, mercies must be expected in the way of prayer, that being God's appointed way, and stated method in the dispensing of them.

(2.) As prayer hath influence into the procuring of our mercies, so it hath a singular influence into the sweetening of them: no mercies so sweet as those that are received upon the knee. There is a two-fold sweetness men taste in their earthly enjoyments: one is *natural*, and that those that never eye God in them, may relish as much as others; the other is *spiritual* and supernatural, resulting from the consideration of the way in which, and the end for which they are given: and I am confident, such is the refreshing sweetness of mercies coming in the way of prayer, that they derive a thousand times more sweetness from the channel through which they come, than they have in their own natures. So that it was rightly observed by him that said, 'A believer tastes more sweetness in the common bread he eats 'at his own table, than another can do in the consecrated bread he 'eats at the Lord's table.' And then,

(3.) Prayer hath a sanctifying influence upon all our enjoyments, and therefore no wonder it makes them so sweet: what you obtain this way, you obtain with a blessing, and that is the sweetest and best part of any enjoyment. So you find, 1 Tim. iv. 5. every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. One mercy of this kind is better than ten thousand promiscuously dispensed in the way of common providence: by these no man knows love or hatred; but these surely come from God's love to us, and end in the increase of our love to him. So that you see prayer hath a manifold influence upon our mercies: But it is not any kind of prayer that doth thus procure, sweeten, and sanctify our mercies to us: some men's prayers rather obstruct than further their mercies; but if it be the fervent prayer of a righteous man, directed by the rule of the word to the glory of God, we may say of such a prayer as David said of Saul's sword, and Jonathan's bow, it never returns empty *.

Thirdly, I shall shew what aid and assistance the prayers of others may give to the procurement of the mercies we desire; for you see this instance in the text, it was the united joint-prayers of the disciples with Paul, that on this occasion was judged necessary.

Now considering prayer according to its use and end, as a mean of obtaining mercy from the Lord; the more disposed, apt, and vigorous the means are, the more *surely* and *easily* the mercies are obtained which we pray for. There may be much zeal, fervency, and strength in the prayer of a single saint: Jacob alone may wrestle with God, and as a prince prevail; but much more in the joint, united force of many Jacobs. *Vis unita fortior;* if one can do much, many can do more. O what may not a blessed combination of holy and humble spirits obtain from the Lord! If one man's heart be dead and out of tune, another's may be lively and full of affection. Besides,

* If the good ask good, it is in a good manner, and for a good end.

God delights in those acts of mercy most, by which many are refreshed and comforted; and where there is a common stock of prayers going, like a common adventure in one ship, there the return of prayer, like the return of such a ship, makes many glad hearts. Certainly it is of great advantage for the people of God, to engage as many as they can to pray for them. When Daniel was to obtain that secret from the God of heaven, Dan. ii. 17, 18. he makes use of his three friends to improve their acquaintance with God, and interest in God for him upon that occasion. "Then Daniel went to his "house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Aza-"riah his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of "heaven concerning this secret." Some Christians have greater intimacies with God than others, they are special favourites in the court of heaven; and what an advantage is it to be upon their hearts, when they are with God, judge ye. I remember St. Bernard having spoken of the due frames and tempers that Christians should strive to work their hearts into, when they are engaged in this work of prayer, concludes with this request, *Et quum talis fueris, memento mei. And when thy heart* (saith he) *is in this temper, then remember me.* Oh! it is a singular mercy to be interested in their prayers that are in special favour with God! it is true, Jesus Christ is the great favourite, for whose sake all prayers are heard: and without his intercession, the intercessions of an Abraham, a Moses, a Jacob, signify nothing, but in the virtue of his intercession, the intercessions of others may be singularly advantageous to us. Job's friends were good men, but yet they must go to Job, and get his prayers for them before God would be intreated for them, Job xlii. 8.

And, indeed, upon the contrary, it is a sad sign that God designs not to give us that mercy which he takes off our own hearts, or the hearts of others from praying for. When he saith, Pray not for such a man, or for such a mercy for him, the case then becomes hopeless, the mercy is set, and there is no moving it, Jer. xiv. 11. But if once a spirit of prayer be poured upon you, and upon others too in your behalf, you may look upon the mercy as even at the door, and count it as good as if it were in your hand. And thus you see what the mercies are you should pray for; what influence prayer hath upon them; and what assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the obtaining of them; that so your hearts may be excited and encouraged, not only to pray for yourselves, but to engage as many as you can to seek the Lord for you, as you see Paul here did, when he was undertaking his dangerous voyage. In the next place I shall apply it.

Use 1. And, first, This may serve sharply to reprove the generality of our seamen, who mind every thing necessary to their voyage, except prayer, the principal thing; who go out in voyages without asking God's leave or blessing. And here three sorts of persons fall under conviction, and just rebuke.

First, Such as do but mock God, and delude themselves by heartless, dead and empty formalities. Some there be that dare not altogether slight and neglect prayers, but *pro forma*, they will do something themselves; and it may be as a compliment, or, at most, as a customary thing, will desire the prayers of others: but, alas! there is no heartiness or sincerity in these things; they are no way affected with the sense of their own wants, sins, or dangers; they never understood the use, nature, or end of prayer. We blame the blind Papists, and that justly, for their blind devotions, who reckon their prayers by number, and not by weight; and truly, there is but little difference between theirs, and some of our devotions. It is * St. Augustine's counsel, "Do you learn to have in your hearts what "every one hath in his lips." O that you would once learn to be in earnest with God! to pray as men that understand with whom you have to do; and what great things you have to transact with God! ah, my friends, you may believe it, that if ever you had felt the weight of sin upon your consciences, and had had such sick days and nights for it, as some have had, you would not ask a pardon so coldly and indifferently as you do. If you did but know the benefit of God's presence with you in troubles, how sweet it is; or could but apprehend how terrible a thing it is to be left of God, as Saul was in the day of distress, you would weep and make supplication for his gracious presence to go forth with you; and would say, with Moses, "If thy "presence may not go with me, then carry me not hence." But, alas! these things appear not to you in their reality and importance. And hence is all that wretched formality and deadness of spirit.

Secondly, It rebukes much more such as wholly slight and neglect prayer, as a useless and vain thing; who undertake designs without prayer, not at all acknowledging God in any of their ways. And it is justly to be suspected, there are multitudes of such practical atheists among seamen, as well as other orders of men. Poor men! my heart mourneth over you; you are certainly a forlorn set of men, who live without God in the world. It was anciently said, "he that would "learn to pray, let him go to sea †:" But now, how long may a man be at sea, before he hear a praying seaman! Let your families from which you part, witness what conscience you have made to seek God, as you have been here directed, before your outset: it is said, Deut. xxxiii. 18. to the tribe of seamen, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy "going out." But in this case we may invert the words, and say, *Mourn, O ye seamen, in your going out.* How deplorable a case is this? Let your cabins witness what conscience you make of the duty of prayer: you can talk and sleep there, but when did you pray there? You there hear the voice of God in the roaring seas; but when did God hear your voice in prayer? You see the wonders of God in the

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* *Discite habere in corde, quod omnis homo habet in lingua.* Aug. in Ps. 32.

† *Qui nescit arare, discat navigare.*

deeps, wonders of *creation*, and wonders of *preservation*; but mean time you yourselves are the greatest wonders that are to be seen in the sea: men imediately depending upon God for their lives, liberties, and estates, every moment, and not once owning or acknowledging him by prayer.

The very * Heathens will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you. I remember Plato brings in Alcibiades asking Socrates, How he ought to express his resolution and purposes? To whom he thus answereth; "Before every undertaking thou must say, "If God will." And we know the eastern nations would undertake nothing of moment, without first acknowledging God by prayer. The Greeks συν Θεω, by the leave or blessing of God is known to all. The Turks will condemn such as you are, for they fail not to pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be. The blind and superstitious Papists will condemn you, with whom it is a proverb, *Mass and meat hinder no man.* Oh! whither will you turn? And who shall comfort you when trouble comes upon you? Wonder not at crosses and disappointments in your business; how can you expect it should be otherwise, as long as God is neglected, yea, disowned? Say not, this is the fruit of *ill luck*, but of your profane neglects. If the success of all your business depends upon God (as none but Atheists dare deny) then certainly the directest and readiest course a man can take to destroy all, is to disengage God by a sinful neglect of him. The most compendious way to ruin, is to forget God, and cast off prayer. "Pour out thy fury (saith the prophet) upon the heathen "that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy "name," Jer. x. 25. Will nothing less than extremity make you cry to God? Wonder not then, if God bring you unto that extremity which your profaneness makes necessary for your awakening.

Thirdly and *lastly*, How much sadder, and more deplorable, is the case of those that not only neglect to call upon the name of God by prayer, but do also wound his name through and through by their cursed oaths and blasphemies? who instead of going on board praying, as Paul here did, go on board cursing, swearing, and blaspheming his great and dreadful name; not going from their *bended knees*, but drunken *ale-benches*, to the ship.

O the admirable patience of God! O the power of his long-suffering! that ever that ship should swim one hour above water, that carries such loads of sin and guilt within it! It is noted in Gen. iv. 26. in the days of Seth, "That then men began to call upon the name of the "Lord." Some translate the word לקרא *invocation*, or prayer, and some profanation; then began profaneness in calling upon the name of the Lord. In a mournful feeling of this dishonour done to God by it, Seth calls the son that was born to him in those times, *Enoch*, or *Sorrowful*. Sure I am, however the word be here to be translated,

* Αλλα πως χρη λεγειν; *cui respondet* Socrates. Οτι εαν Θεος θελη. Plato in Timeo.

there is a vile generation in our days, that instead of calling upon the name of the Lord by prayer, do call upon it profanely, rending and tearing that great and terrible name with the language of hell. Poor man! with what hope or encouragement can those lips of thine, in the day of thy extremity, cry, *Mercy! mercy!* that have struck through the sacred name of God so many times with blasphemy! O that you would lay it to heart! O that this day God would set your sins in order before you.

Is this a beginning that promises a comfortable issue? Do you thus prepare yourselves to meet death and danger? O my soul! come not thou into their secrets! O let God rather strike me perfectly dead whilst I live, than afflict my soul through my ears with these dreadful dialects of the damned.

Use 2. In the next place, this point is exceeding useful, by way of *exhortation*, to persuade all men, and particularly seamen, to be men of prayer; to imitate that noble pattern in the text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty so necessary, so sweet, and so beneficial to them, as the duty of prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty! how would you give yourselves unto prayer! As David speaks, Psal. cix. 4. Now to persuade you to be praying men, and no longer to live in the neglect of so excellent a duty, I will offer these motives to your consideration.

Motive 1. *God hath stiled himself a God hearing prayer.* For your encouragement to this duty, he hath assumed this title to himself, Psal. lxv. 2. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all "flesh come." You cry not as the Heathens do, to stocks and stones, that cannot help or hear them that seek to them, but to the living and true God, by whom never did any upright soul lose a prayer. And to come home to your case more fully, he is a God that hears the prayers of poor distressed men upon the seas, when all hope and human help have utterly failed them. So you read in Psalm cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. "They that go down to the sea in ships, "that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, "and his wonders in the deep: for he commandeth, and raiseth "the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof: they mount "up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is "melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger "like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry "unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their "distress." So that what the Psalmist elsewhere speaks of the mystical depths of trouble, is true here even in a proper literal sense: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice," Psal. cxxx. 1, 2. Many a prayer hath been heard, and miraculously answered upon the sea. There have men been convinced, and fully satisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord. So evident and clear have been the appearances of God at the cry of the poor di-

stressed creatures, that they have sensibly and thankfuly acknowledged him according to his name; "The hope of the ends of the "earth, and the confidence of them that are afar off upon the sea," Psal. lxv. 5. Who is there among you, that has not either heard of, or himself been an example, and instance of this truth? I might here insert many famous examples to confirm it, but the case is too plain to need them, and it would be too great a digression.

Motive 2. *Prayer is certainly the best relief to the distressed.* We may say of it, as David said of the sword of Goliath, give me that, for there is none like it. You that are seamen, know what the use of the *pump* is, when the waters leak into your ship, and of what use the scupper-holes are to you, when waves break and dash over your necks: why, of the same use is prayer, when sorrow leaks into your hearts, and distresses are ready to overwhelm your souls. This gives a vent to that which else would quickly sink you. "Your heart "shall live that seek the Lord," Psal. lxix. 32. Prayer will buoy up your fainting spirits; it will sensibly ease an oppressed heart. No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying. Luther was wont to call prayers the leeches of his cares and troubles. O but if troubles come in upon a man every way, and he have no vent, no outlet for them when the ordinary vents of reason, courage, and resolution are all choaked (as sometimes they are) and there is no succour or relief coming in from heaven; what a wretched forlorn condition is such a poor creature in? O therefore get acquaintance with this excellent duty.

Motive 3. *All secondary means of deliverance and comfort necessarily depend upon the will and pleasure of God, and signify nothing without him.* What the Psalmist saith of an horse, I may say of a ship, Psal. xxxiii. 17. That it is a vain thing for safety. Alas! what a poor defence is it against those giant-like waves of the sea? And that men (especially seamen) may be convinced of this, God hath many times caused those stately and strong-built ships to perish, and be dashed all to pieces, and preserved those that were not safe in them upon a plank or broken piece of the ship, Acts xxvii. 44. which has carried them more safely to the shore than it could do. And will you not yet see that means signify nothing without God, and that your dependence upon him is necessary in every condition, and the acknowledgment thereof so too? I am persuaded there would not be half so many shipwrecks aud disappointments as there are, if your carnal confidence in the means were less, and your reliance upon the Lord more. Therefore it is that you so often receive the sentence of death in yourselves, that you may learn not to trust in yourselves, but in God. Oh! were but your sails filled by prayer, how prosperous would your designs be?

Motive 4. *Whatever deliverances from dangers, or success in business, you receive out of the way of prayer, can yield you but little comfort; for they are not sanctified to you.* You may be delivered, though

you pray not, and success may follow those that seek not God for it; but that which you call deliverance is rather a reservation to future misery; and that you call success, is but a snare to your souls. You have the things, but not the comfort and blessing of them. God may give you your desire to your ruin: your lives may be rescued for a time from death, that you may fill up the measure of your iniquities. Your affairs may prosper, and that prosperity may destroy you, Prov. i. 32. At best it is but an effect of common providence; and of such deliverances you can never say as Hezekiah said of his; and every one that receives the like mercy in the way of prayer, may say of his, Isa. xxxviii. 17. "But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the "pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." I deny not, but a deliverance by the hand of common providence is a mercy in itself; and it may prove a very great mercy to you in the event, if time thereby added to your life be a space of repentance; else it is but a short reprieval of your damnation, and leaves you to perish under greater guilt than was upon you before. But, on the contrary, how sweet are those mercies that come in the way of prayer; that discover God's love to you, and inflame yours to him? One such mercy is worth a thousand of the former.

Motive 5. *Consider all you that go out without prayer, how soon you may be out of a capacity of prayer.* Now you will not, and shortly you may not, have one opportunity to pray for evermore: now unbelief shuts your mouths, and shortly death may do it. How soon may you be past your prayers, both your own and others, and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition? O seek the Lord therefore whilst he may be found, call upon him whilst he is yet near. Now is your praying season, hereafter there will be no use of prayer. "For this (saith the Psalmist) shall every one that is godly pray "unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the "floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him." Psal. xxxii. 6. i. e. saith Deodate upon the place, in the time of the general destruction of sinners, as it was in the deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by prayer, nor canst thou come nigh him in the day of thy particular destruction, by the flood of great waters. O therefore live not a day longer in the profane and sinful neglect of this great duty of prayer!

Object. *Why, but I observe those that pray not, generally escape as well as they that do.*

Answ. This objection was once made by a soldier in the time of fight, when he was pressed by his companion to pray; and God quickly stopped his blasphemous mouth with a mortal bullet. Have a care of such bold atheistical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord against you: I had rather die praying, than live prayerless.

Object. *But to what purpose is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God hears not such prayers, if I make them: and, besides, the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

Answ. Labour therefore to get into a regenerate state, and be not persuaded to rest a day longer in so sad a condition. However in the mean time you must know, that prayer being a part of natural worship, all men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to it by the light and law of nature; otherwise the neglect of it could not be their sin.

Object. *But many pray, and receive not: I myself have often done so.*

Answ. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss," Jam. iv. 3. If we were disposed to receive as God is to give, we should not be long without the answer of our prayers.

(1.) If your persons were accepted through Christ, your prayers should be accepted too, Gen. iv. 4. But you are in a state of nature, destitute of the Spirit, John xv. 7. And so your voice is to God not the voice of a child, but a stranger.

(2.) If your prayers were regulated by the will of God, they could not miss of the desired success; 1 John v. 14. "If we ask any thing "according to his will, he heareth us."

(3.) If your prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty; see Jam. i. 6. and v. 16. Well then, object no more against your duty, but in the fear of God, apply yourselves to it, and dare not to go forth in any design, until thou hast by prayer recommended thyself and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my friends, retire from the world; and say not you cannot spare time for prayer; better any thing else were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the ocean, and knowest not what this voyage may bring forth. Possibly thou mayest never return to the land of thy nativity any more; but however it shall please him to dispose the event, beseech him with all earnestness, that thou mayest have the pardon of sin sealed to thee before thou go. O beg him to separate guilt from thy person, before thou be separated from thy habitation and relations; lest that stroke that shall separate thy soul from thy body, should eternally separate both soul and body from God.

Desire of the Lord that his presence may go with thee wherever thou shalt go. Tell him it is the fountain both of thy safety and comfort. Desire him if his presence may not go with thee, not to carry thee hence. All the relief thou hast against trouble, is wrapped up in that promise of his, *I will be with him in trouble.* Tell him, those will be tasteless comforts, and succourless troubles, in which he is not.

Intreat the Lord with all importunity, to keep thee by his fear, from the sins and temptations that are in the world. Tell him thou art sensibly affected with the danger which thy own corrupt heart will every where expose thee to: sins in buying and selling, into which thou mayest easily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart: sins in drinking, wherein thou mayest be entangled (except he keep thee) by evil company and an irregular appetite: sins of uncleanness,

by which thou mayest be overcome in the absence of lawful remedies, and presence of alluring objects, except his fear quench the temptation, and break the snare.

Be earnest also with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canst not be in safety any where, but under the shadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt trust in him*; and beseech him, that when thy heart shall be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the rock that is higher than thee. Beseech him also to give thee counsel in all thy straits and difficulties, that thou mayest not lean to thine own understanding, but that he will make thy way plain before thee.

And if it be his good pleasure, that he would bless thy just and honest enterprizes with success and prosperity; which if he shall do, tell him it is thy desire, and beg the assistance of his grace, that thou mayest improve all thy mercies to his praise. If thus you set forth in the fear of God, you may expect a sweet success, and happy issue.

THE SEAMAN IN A STORM.

SERMON II.

PSAL. cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distress.

THIS *psalm* contains an excellent account of the mysterious and admirable effects of providence: and this *paragraph* contains that vein or branch of *divine providence* which respects seamen; a sort of men more immediately depending upon the favour of providence than any men in the world; though all do necessarily and continually depend upon it.

In these verses we have a description, both (1.) of the persons, (2.) of the danger, (3.) of the deliverance, by the wonderful working of *divine providence* for them.

First, A description of the persons about whom this wonderful providence is exercised: "They that go down to the sea in ships; that "do business in great waters;" the periphrasis of a *seaman*. These

are said *to go down to the sea in ships*, not because the sea is lower than the land, but because it is lower than the shore, which is the rampart raised by providence against its inundations. And their end or design in going down into the sea, is not pleasure and recreation, but to do business, i. e. to export and import such wares and commodities as are necessary, if not to the being, at least to the well-being of the several kingdoms and countries of the world. These are the men here spoken of, who "see (more than any) the works of the "Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Works and wonders by an εν δια δυοιν, an usual figure, is as much as his wonderful works; namely, of *creation*, in the strange and monstrous productions of the sea; and of *preservation*, with respect to themselves, in the dreadful dangers they there encounter. Thus the person or subject is described.

Secondly, The danger is likewise described in which these sea-faring men are sometimes involved: and indeed the Psalmist here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant description of their condition in the stormy sea; and shews us how deplorable their state and condition is at such a time. Where we are to note both the causes and effects of these tempests.

1. The causes; and they are twofold.

First, The principal cause, the will and pleasure of God. He commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds. This is God's prerogative: none can raise winds but himself, and if devils or witches do it at any time, yet it is still by his permission; as you see in Job i. 12, 19. the Lord is said to hold the wind in his fists, Prov. xxx. 4. as a man holds a wild fierce beast in a chain, or by a collar: and when they blow, "He brings them out of his treasuries," Psal. cxxxv. 7. There is indeed a natural cause of winds, of whom philosophers give us this rational account, "That it is a hot and dry exhalation raised 'from the earth by the power of the heavenly bodies, which being 'repelled or foreed back by the coldness of the middle region, moves 'obliquely or slantingly, and sometimes very violently through the 'air.' But though this be the natural cause of the winds, yet this doth not at all restrain the absolute sovereignty of God over them. It is he *that commands and raiseth them*, as the text speaks; and though it be said, John iii. 8. "The wind blows where it listeth;" yet that expression makes it not an arbitrary creature; but the meaning is, either thus, It blows where it listeth, for any opposition that man can make to it, though it cannot blow where it listeth in respect to God. Or thus, such is the great variableness and instability of the winds, blowing now this way, now that, that it seems to move with a kind of spontaneity, as a bird doth in the air: though indeed it doth but seem so, for all its motions are ordered of the Lord. And you cannot say in this sense, as 1 Kings ix. 11. "That God is not in the "wind." Now when it pleaseth the Lord to shew his power upon the great deeps, he sends forth these winds out of his treasure. This is the principal cause. Then next,

2. We have the instrumental, subordinate and next cause of the storm; and that is, the 'winds lifting up the waves of the ocean.' There is naturally in the sea a continual agitation and rolling of its waters hither and thither; it *cannot rest*, as the prophet speaks of it; but when a violent wind blows upon it, the ocean is incensed and enraged; and the winds roll moving mountains of water before them. Then, like wild beasts, the waves seem to break loose and rage; not only to be *latrantes undas*, as Virgil calls them, *barking waves*, but κυματα αγρια, *raging waves*, as Jude speaks, ver. 13. Yea, *roaring waves*, as our Saviour stiles them, Luke xxi. 25. Thus of the causes of the storm principal and subordinate. Next we have,

Secondly, The terrible effects of the tempests, and that both upon their bodies and their minds.

(1.) External upon their bodies; it tosses them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the Psalmist elegantly expresses in the text, "They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths," a lofty hyperbolical expression; very near unto it is that of Virgil:

Tollimur in cœlum, curvato gurgite; et iidem,
Subducta, ad manes imos descendimus, unda! Æn. 3.

They seem to mix with the very clouds, and then open deep graves for them in the bottom sands. Yea, it moves them not only perpendicularly, lifting them up, and casting them down, but obliquely and circularly also. "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a "drunken man," or, as some translate, *agitantur in gyrum*, they run round: they are, indeed, moved according to the unstable motion of the waves, on whose proud backs they are mounted. This is the external effect of the storm upon their bodies.

(2.) The internal effect of it upon their minds, which is far more terrible. For it is said here, *Their soul is melted because of trouble, and they are at their wit's end.* Both which expressions do import a greater commotion and storm in the passions of the mind, than that is in the waves of the sea. The stoutest spirit quails and melts when it comes to this; and the wisest artist is at his wit's end. Thus you have the description of the persons, and of their danger, both in the cause and effects upon the body and mind. Next,

(3.) We have their deliverance by the wonderful hand of Divine Providence, in ver. 27. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trou- "ble, and he brings them out of their distress." Their usual cry in such extraordinary exigencies, is, *mercy! mercy!* Now they can pray that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with cries, but vows to the Lord, and he delivers them out of their distresses: some delivered one way, and some another, but all in a stupendous way, which cannot but astonish them that are so delivered, and make them acknowledge the finger of God was in it.

From all this we observe,

Doct. *That the preservations and deliverances of seamen in the dreadful storms and tempests at sea, is the wonderful work of Divine Providence.*

" The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that " have pleasure therein ;" Psal. cxi. 2. And, among his providential works, none greater and more admirable than those which seamen daily behold in their great and marvellous protections upon the sea.

Now the glory of Divine Providence towards seamen shines and displays itself in three things especially, *first*, In making the ocean navigable for them at any time. *Secondly*, in preserving them from shipwrecks in the fury and stress of weather. *Thirdly*, In finding out ways, and strangely providing means of safety, when their ships are lost, and broken upon the sea.

1. It is a wonderful providence of God to make the ocean navigable for men at any time ; that such a fluid body as water is, which cannot support a stone or bullet of an ounce weight, should yet, by reason of its own saltness, and the innate property of timber *, be able to support ships of such vast burden, which are carried from place to place, being mounted on the backs of its proud waves. Who can but acknowledge a most wise providence, in gratifying the natural wit and desire of man, which fits him for converse and traffic with foreign nations ; with instruments and materials so fit for his purpose as timber, iron, hemp, pitch, the loadstone, and whatever else is necessary for this purpose? I cannot open the wisdom of God's providence in this respect to better advantage than I find it done by the learned pen of Dr. More, in his Antidote against Atheism, page 58. ' Navi- ' gation (saith he) being of so great consequence to the delight and ' convenience of human life, and there being both wit and courage in ' man to attempt the seas, were he but fitted with right materials, ' and other advantages requisite ; when we see there is so pat ' a provision made for him to this purpose, in large timber for the ' building of his ship, a thick sea-water to bear the ship's burden ; in ' the *magnet* or loadstone for his compass ; in the steady and paral- ' lel direction of the axis of the earth for his *cynosura* ; and then ob- ' serve his natural wit and courage to make use of them ; and how ' that ingenite desire of knowledge and converse, and of the improv- ' ing of his own parts and happiness, stir him up to so notable a de- ' sign : we cannot but conclude from such a train of causes, so fitly ' and congruously complying together, that it was really the counsel ' of an universal and eternal mind, that hath the overseeing and gui- ' dance of it,' &c.

2. But (to come home to the case before us) that men should be

* Rather by the pressure of the atmosphere upon the mass of water in the ocean. *Editor.*

preserved at sea from immediate ruin in the dreadful tempests that befal them there; this is a mysterious and admirable work of God: that a poor ship should not be swallowed up by the furious ocean, when mountains of water come rolling towards it with an horrid noise, and give it such dreadful stripes: when seas roll over it, and so cover it with the waves, that for a time they know not whether they sink or swim; to see it emerge out of such fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of those lofty seas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it: O how great is the power and care of providence in such a case! especially if you consider these following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every side: and should but one of these many contingencies befal them, in the eye of reason they are lost men.

1. Of how many parts, compared together, doth a ship consist? These parts indeed are fastened together with bolts of iron; but being in so many planks, what a wonder is it that none springs, that no bolt gives way, or seams open, whilst every part works with such violence, and so great a stress of weather lies upon it. Should such a thing fall out, (as it is a wonder it should not), how soon would the ship swim within as well as without?

2. How often are they put from their course by stress of weather, and know not where they are; not being able, for many days, to take any observation? so that they must go whither winds and waves will drive them: for there is no dropping anchors in the main, nor resisting the course of the seas, to which they can make no more resistance than a child to a giant. And how is it they are not dashed upon the rocks, or foundered in the sands, seeing the winds shape their course, and not art? But there is a God that steers your course for you when you cannot.

3. How often are you even fallen upon rocks and shores before you see them, and are almost past *hope* before you begin to *fear*? Sometimes almost imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a rock or head-land, which you discerned not until it was almost too late.

I remember Dr. Johnson, in that ingenious and wonderful narrative of his voyage to the Sound, when he had survived two shipwrecks, and was embarked in the third ship, 'We had not (saith 'he) been above two or three hours at sea, but there was a sad dis-'traction among us in the ship, and the mariners crying, *mercy!* '*mercy!* for we had almost fallen foul on a rock, which lay so cun-'ning in the water, that we did not espy it till we were upon it; 'but by the goodness of God we sailed close by it, and so escaped 'it: the least touch of it had been our ruin.'

4. How often do you ride at anchor in furious weather, near rocks and shores? Your lives, under God, every moment depending upon a cable and anchor: if the one break, or the other come home, you

are lost men. And how wonderful is it they do not! what is a cable in a storm, but as the new cords with which the Philistines bound Samson, and as easily would they be snapt asunder like a thread of tow, were it not for the care of providence over you? These, and an hundred other accidents which hourly threaten you, might, and would send you down to the bottom, but that the Lord permits it not so to be.

5. And yet more wonderful than all this; how often doth God suffer ships to founder and sink under you, and to be dashed to pieces against the rocks, and yet preserve you when the ordinary means of preservation are cut off and gone? Who like these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep?

For, *first*, sometimes a small boat shall save them, when a stout ship could not: thus many of them have been wonderfully preserved; and thus the aforementioned author relates the manner of this wonderful preservation. 'Our ship (saith he) had sprung a leak, or rather a plank, and was ready to sink: O how the face of every man was changed at this affrightment! one was at his prayers, another wringing his hands, a third shedding tears, when we had no need of more salt-water. After this fit they fell to work, and (as it is usual in such extremes) we were all busy in doing nothing, and did we knew not what. The master's mate, whom we sent down to search out the leak, quickly returned to us with a sad countenance, trembling hands, gnashing of teeth, a quivering tongue, and words half spoken, signifying unto us, that the wound was incurable. Here was now no room for counsel, neither had we time to ask one another what was best to be done; but we presently cast out our long-boat, and shot off eight or ten guns, which seemed to be so many tolls of a passing-bell before our death. I leaped into the boat, but leaped short, one leg in the boat, *Alterum in Charontis cymba.* Now were we left in the north seas, which seldom wear a smooth brow; but at this time contending with the wind, swelled into prodigious mountains. It blew half a storm, and we were now in a small vessel: what credit could we give to our safety in a small and open shallop, when so stately a castle of wood, which we but now lost, could not defend itself against the insolency of the waves? We were many leagues from any shore, having no compass to guide us, nor provisions to sustain us, and the night grew black upon us—— Nothing but a miracle could preserve us, being out of the reach of human help——We fell to prayer, and our extremity pleaded for us:——For in this moment of death, when we were without the least expectation of deliverance, he sent a ship to us, which we must needs confess to be the finger of God,' &c. Thus he——And thus has been the wonderful door opened in extremity to multitudes more for their escape: but, oh! how astonishing are these ways of the Lord? Well may we say, "His ways are in the sea, and his paths

" in the great deep, and his footsteps are not known," Psal. lxxvii. 19.

Secondly, Sometimes they shall be cast upon a rock in the sea, where they shall be preserved until some other way of deliverance come; yea, preserved strangely, God blessing a small matter of provision which they saved to sustain them; though they said of it, as the widow of Sarepta to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. " I " have but an handful of meal, and a little oil, and I am gathering " two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that " we may eat it, and die." Or if they could save nothing, yet a few muscles or birds eggs, with God's blessing, have sustained them until the time of mercy come. This hath been the case of many. Think upon this you that abuse the good creatures of God by drunkenness: how sweet would a cup of fresh water be to you when reduced to such extremity? Oh! if your hearts be not harder than the rocks you lay upon, how would such extraordinary mercies melt you into love and thankfulness?

Thirdly, Sometimes they have been wafted to the shore safely upon the wreck *, or by making a raft of the broken pieces of the ship, and torn sails, and ropes; and upon this (God knows, a poor security against the boisterous waves) have they ventured themselves: a sinking man (as we say) will catch at a bulrush. Paul, and those that suffered shipwreck with him, were thus saved; " The centu- " rion commanded, that they which could swim, should cast them- " selves first into the sea, and get to land; and the rest, some on " boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship; and so it came to " pass that they escaped all safe to land," Acts xxvii. 43, 44.

Oh, the miraculous works of the Lord! to save by such contemptible and improbable means! Who can but with great joy see and acknowledge the finger of God to be here? " Lo, these are parts of " his way; but how little a portion is heard of him?" Job xxvi. 14.

1. *Use of repreof.* If your preservation in storms at sea, be the wonderful works of Divine Providence, then divers of you deserve to be sharply reproved from this truth. And I beseech you suffer the word of reproof meekly and penitently. I shall speak nothing to reproach you; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you: and if you hate reproof, and mock at counsel, God may shortly speak in such thundering language to your consciences, as will be terrible for you to bear. I remember, it is said of St. Bernard, That whilst he was seriously reproving the profaneness of one (and if I misremember not, it was his own brother) who was a soldier, and observing how he slighted his holy and serious counsel, his spirit was greatly grieved at it, and he told him, ' Brother, God I fear, will shortly make way ' to your heart with a sword, to which my words can find no access:' And the event soon verified the sad prediction. I pray God none of

* *Tabula post naufragium.*

you may be taught by captivities and shipwrecks what it is to reject faithful reproofs and wholesome counsel, seasonably given for your good. You that read these lines, seriously ask your own consciences these following questions.

(1.) Have you not soon forgotten the works and wonders of the Lord, which your eyes have seen? It may be, for the present, you have been sensibly affected with your danger, and the mercy of God in your deliverance, but hath it remained upon your hearts? I doubt these mercies have been written in the dust, which should have been engraven, as in the rock, for ever. Thus it was with Israel, a people that saw as many wonders wrought for them by the immediate finger of God, as ever did any people in the world: and yet it is said of them, even after the *Red-sea* deliverance, in which "God divided "the sea for them, when the waves thereof roared," Isa. li. 15. and with which, for the present, their hearts were greatly affected; for it is said, Psalm cvi. 12. "That they believed his word, and sang "his praises;" but in the next verse you read, that a little time easily wiped out the sense of this mercy; for it is said, ver. 13. "They soon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsels." I doubt this was not the sin of Israel only, but is the case of many of you at this day. Well, God did not forget you in the time of extremity, though you so quickly forgot him. Think not to excuse yourselves from this guilt by saying, you do still remember the thing: you may do so, and yet be said to forget his mercy: for a deliverance may be remembered by him that received it two ways; namely, *speculatively* and *affectingly*. A speculative remembrance is only to call to mind the story of such a danger and preservation; this you may do, and yet God account himself forgotten, except you so remember it as still to feel the powerful impressions thereof upon your hearts, softening and melting them into thankfulness, love, and dependence upon the God of your salvations.

(2.) Have you not walked very unanswerably to your deliverances, yea, and to the solemn engagements you made to God in the day of your distress? I fear some of you have walked after God hath rescued you by a wonderful immediate hand from the jaws of death, as if you had been *delivered to do all these abominations*. As it is Jer. vii. 10. It may be the *last* week or month you were reeling to and fro upon the stormy sea, and staggering *like* drunken men; and *this*, reeling and staggering along the streets really drunken. O horrid abomination! do you thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your distress, and, being full of compassion, saved you when you cried to him? Is this the fruit of your wonderful salvation? If a man should have told you in that day it would have been thus, you yourselves could not have believed it, but would have answered as Hazael did to the prophet, 2 Kings viii. 13. 'What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?" Yet so it was, and so it is still: the Lord humble you for this great wickedness. If this be all the fruit of mercy and deliverance, it had

been better for you that you had gone down to the bottom then, rather than to live only to treasure up more wrath against the day of wrath, and fill up your measure.

(3.) Are there not a sort of atheistical seamen, who own not providence at all, either in the raising of these horrid tempests, or in their marvellous preservation in them! but look on all as coming in a natural way, and their escape to be only by good fortune and chance? How wonderful a thing is it in the eyes of all considering men, that providence should take any notice of them in a way of favour, that so wickedly disown it, and so directly disoblige it? How can you possibly shut your eyes against such clear light, and stop your ears against such loud and plain language, whereby the power and goodness of God proclaims itself to you in these providences! Ah! methinks you should most readily and thankfully subscribe that great truth, Psal. lxviii. 20. "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto "God the Lord belong the issues from death." But though men see signs and wonders they will not believe; yea, though they themselves become wonders to the world by their miraculous deliverances, yet so brutish and stupid are they, that they will not see the hand that saves them. Take heed what you do: you set yourselves in the direct way to destruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon and cast you out of the care of his providence: and if he once do so, you are lost men.

(4.) And yet more vile (if more vileness can be in sin) than all this: is there not a generation of wretched men among you, that fall a swearing, cursing, and blaspheming God, even when he is uttering his terrible voice in the tempest, and every moment threatening to intomb them in the deep? When you should be upon your knees bewailing your sins, and pleading with God for mercy, (as I doubt not but some of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his face; and yet more incensing his indignation, which is already kindled against you; who, that hears this can chuse but admire the riches of God's patience and forbearance towards such men? The very heathen mariners in a storm *called every man upon his god*, Jonah i. 5. We say, extremity will cause the worst of men to pray, and compose the vainest spirit unto seriousness; but it seems by you it will not. Is this the frame and temper you will meet death in? What! speaking the language of devils and damned spirits before you come among them; hastening on your own ruin as if it were too slack and lingering in its motion? The Lord open the eyes of these miserable creatures, and convince them, that they are not only going to hell as others are, but that they are the forlorn of all that wretched crew that are bound thither; and proportionably will be their misery, except they repent.

2. *Use of exhortation.* This point is yet farther improveable for you by way of exhortation, serving to press you to those proper duties

which God calls you to by his terrible providential voice in the storms, and by your wonderful deliverances.

1. And the first lesson you are to learn from hence is, *To adore the power of God.* O what a manifestation of Divine power is here! you are the men that see more than others the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. It is one of God's ends in shewing you these wonders, "To make his mighty power known," Psal. cvi. 8. O what a terrible voice doth God utter upon the seas when the heavens are black above you, the furious winds and dreadful thunders rattling about you, the seas and waves roaring beneath you! Is not this voice of the Lord full of majesty? Doth it not awe your hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his infinite power is discovered to you.

First, In raising these terrible tempests, and that from so small and weak a beginning as a thin vapour from the earth is; this is the wonderful work of God, Psal. cxxxv. 7. "He causeth the vapours "to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for "the rain, he bringeth wind out of his treasures."

Secondly, In limiting and bounding their force and power; what prodigious effects else would follow: The wind is a fierce and boisterous creature, and would (if God did not by his providence restrain it) destroy and overturn all, both by sea and land; or if Satan, who is stiled *The prince, or power of the air*, were left at liberty to execute his malice by such an instrument, not a ship should cross the seas, nor a house be safe at land; as is evident enough by the furious haste he made to overturn the house with an horrible tempest upon Job's children, as soon as he had received a permission from heaven to do it.

And, *Thirdly*, No less visible is the power of God in calming and appeasing the stormy winds, and remanding them into his treasures. Psal. cvii. 29. "He maketh the storm a calm." Yea, he doth so in the very nick of time, when all is concluded lost. Thus you read in Mark iv. 39. "When the waves beat into the ship," so that it was now full, and the disciples cried unto the Lord, "Master, carest thou "not that we perish? He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to "the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a "great calm." Just as one would hush a child, *Peace, be still.* O the sovereign power of God! how should it be reverenced and adored by all that behold it, in these marvellous effects of it?

2. The second lesson you are taught by this doctrine is, *To admire the mercy of God.* Mercy is no less discovered than power; yea, the power of God is put forth to give his mercy a fair occasion to shine forth in your deliverance. God sometimes permits your dangers to grow to an extremity, and delays your deliverances to the last moment, till all hopes of safety are gone, upon the like reason that Lazarus's resurrection was deferred, that the work of God in your preservation may commend itself to you under the greatest advantage.

O that you would view these mercies in all their endearing circum-

stances! I can only hint your duty generally in this case; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for such a blessed work. And mark particularly the multitudes of mercies that are complicated and involved in one deliverance. Observe the season when, the manner how, the means by which your salvation was wrought. It is a thousand pities that so much of God's glory and your comfort, as any one, even the smallest circumstance may contain, should ever be lost.

3. *Lastly*, And above all, *See that ye answer God's ends in your deliverance:* If those be lost, God may say concerning you, as David did of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 21. "Surely, in vain have I kept all that "this fellow hath in the wilderness; so that nothing was missed of "all that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good." So here, in vain I kept this fellow upon the sea, when I suffered others to sink; in vain have I preserved his life, liberty, and estate so often by an out-stretched arm of power and mercy to him, seeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me intreat you to be careful to comply with the designs and ends of God in these your wonderful preservations! If you enquire what God's ends or designs in your deliverance are, I answer,

First, It is to lead you to repentance. "The goodness of God "(saith the apostle) leadeth thee to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Dost thou not know the voice of mercy? Why, it bespeaks thy return to God. It may be thou hast spent all thy life, to this day, in the service of sin: Thou never redeemedst one of all thy precious hours to consider thine own estate, to bewail thy sin and misery, to seek after an interest in Christ. Why, now here is a providence fallen in that doth, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee to this great and necessary work. The end of God in raising this storm was to deliver thee from the more dreadful tempest of his wrath, which, without repentance, must shortly overtake thy soul in the blackness of darkness for ever. Now God hath awakened thy conscience by this fright, made it charge home thy sins upon thee, terrified thee with dismal apprehensions of death and hell. O what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for repentance, reformation, and gaining an interest in Jesus Christ! If this season be lost, conscience suffered again to fall into any dead sleep, and thy heart be again hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, thou mayest never have such an opportunity for salvation opened to thee any more.

Secondly, If this end be answered, then a farther design God hath in thy deliverance, is to engage and encourage thy soul to a dependence upon God in future straits and dangers. This is food for faith; and now you are furnished with experience of the power, mercy, and goodness of God, to enable you to rest yourselves upon him when new exigencies befal you. If God exercise you with such extremities another time, you may say with the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 10. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in "whom we trust, he will yet deliver us."

If your first deliverance were a deliverance without a promise, when you were without Christ, what encouragement have you to depend upon him, when his end is answered in your repentance and conversion; and, being in Christ, are entitled to all the promises.

Thirdly, and *lastly*, God's end in your marvellous preservations and deliverances is to furnish you for, and to engage you to a life of praise. O how should the high praises of God be ever in your mouths! you have seen his works and wonders in the deeps; and this is it which the Psalmist presses upon you as a becoming return for your mercies, in the words following my text; "O that men would "praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to "the children of men!"

O with what warm and enlarged affections should you express your thankfulness to the God of your salvation! and say as David, "What "am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's house, that thou "shouldst do such great things for me?" Was such a life as mine worth the working of so many wonders to save it? O Lord, thou knowest it has been a life spent in vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in mine eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine eyes. Many more useful, and less sinful than myself have perished, and I am saved. O Lord, shew me the designs and gracious ends of these deliverances. Surely there is some great thing to be done by me, or else so great a salvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord saw in what a sad case my poor soul was, to be summoned immediately before his judgment-seat: that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had sunk to the bottom of hell: But thou, in love to my soul, hast delivered it from the pit of corruption, that I might yet enjoy a season for salvation, and be once more entrusted with the precious talents of time and means. O that I may not reject or abuse the grace of God in this new instrument, as I have too often done in the former! let me not live as one delivered to commit all these abominations!

And now after all that is come upon me for my evils, seeing thou, my God, hast punished me so much less than my iniquities deserve; and hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again dare to break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. "O let this new mercy "produce a new heart and life!"

THE

SEAMAN's PRESERVATIVE

IN

FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

SERMON III.

PSALM CXXXIX. 9, 10.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

IN this psalm the omnipresence and omniscience of God are the subjects of the Psalmist's meditation; and these attributes are here promiscuously discoursed, not only because of the near affinity that is betwixt their natures, but because the one is the demonstration of the other: It is evident God knows all things, because he fills all places. Touching the omniscience of God, he discovers the infinite perfection of that attribute by the particular and exact notion it takes of all our ways: ver. 3. "Thou compassest my paths, and "art acquainted with all my ways." Of all our words; verse 4. "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest "it altogether." Yea, of all our thoughts; and that not only in the instant of their conception, but long before they were conceived; verse 2. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off," even from eternity. Thus he displays the omniscience of God: And then to make demonstration of the truth and certainty of this doctrine of God's omniscience, he proves it from his omnipresence: q. d. He that fills all things cannot but know all things. Now God's presence fills heaven, yea, and hell too, verse 8. And all parts of the earth and sea, even the remotest, verse 9, 10. And therefore no creature, nor action of any creature, can escape his cognizance. It is not here as among men; if a malefactor be condemned by the laws of one kingdom, he may escape by flying into another; but it is far otherwise here; for saith the Psalmist, (personating a guilty fugitive endeavouring to make an escape from the arrest of God's justice), "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost "parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right "hand shall hold me."

In which words you have these two things mainly remarkable.

1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed.
2. That supposed security and encouragement utterly destroyed.

1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed;

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost "parts of the sea."* Where two things seem to offer towards his protection.

First, The place; the remotest part of the sea; by which you are to understand the most obscure nook in the creation; farthest removed from an inspection or observation.

And, *Secondly*, his swift and speedy flight after the commission of sin, to this supposed refuge and sanctuary: It is here supposed, that a sinner should fly as swift as the light of the sun, which in a moment shines from the east to the west, and so the meaning is, could I flee with a celerity equal to the sun, or his beams of light, which breaking forth in the morning, do in an instant enlighten the remotest parts of the hemisphere: Could I as swiftly flee to the most obscure, remote, solitary place in all the world. Thus the sinner's security is supposed.

2. This supposed security and encouragement is utterly destroyed; "Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall hold "me." † The leading hand of God is not here to be understood, as a directing or guiding hand, to shew the fugitive sinner the way of his escape; but contrarily, "Thy hand shall lead me," as a keeper leads his prisoner back to the place of custody, from which he endeavoured to escape. And the following clause is exigetical: "Thy right hand shall hold," or detain *me*, viz. in strict custody. So that the sum of all is this:

Doct. *That the whole world affords no place of secresy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye and righteous hand of God.*

Jonah fled from the Lord to Tarshish; but could he escape so? No, the Lord sent a storm after him, which brought back the fugitive, Jonah i. 3, 4. We read, Isa. xxix. 15. of such "as dig deep, "to hide their counsels from the Lord," i. e. They plot, contrive, and study to conceal their wicked designs, to sin with greatest secresy and security. But what can possibly be a covering from Him to whose sight all things are naked and manifest? Where can a sinner be hid from him whose presence fills heaven and earth? Jer. xxiii. 25. The scripture gives full proof to this great truth. It is clear from Prov. xv. 3. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil "and the good." And again, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. "For his eyes are "upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; there is no "darkness, nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may "hide themselves." Whoever goes about to conceal a sin in secret, attempts a foolish and impossible design, Psal. xliv. 21. "Shall not "God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart:

* He alludes to the swiftest of all motion, even that of light, which springs in a moment from east to west. *Calvin.*

† *Non accipitur deducere pro viam monstrare: sed deducet me manus tua tanquem custos captivum sibi commissum deduxit.* Vatab.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole "earth," 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Now in the handling of this point I purpose to shew you,

1. That men are often induced to sin upon hopes of secresy and concealment.

2. That to sin upon these encouragements, strongly argues their natural atheism: They think they are safe if men know it not; they reckon not upon God's discovery of them.

3. That these encouragements to sin are vain things, it being impossible any place can hide a sinner from God; and how it appears that the eye of God is, and must needs be upon us, and our actions, wherever we are, and how closely soever we endeavour to hide them: And then apply it.

First, Men are often induced to commit sin upon the hopes of secresy and concealment. Sin (especially some sorts of sin) carry so much shame and *odium* in them, that it restrains men from the open practice of them; but if Satan can persuade them they shall never be divulged to their reproach, they will venture upon them. See that text, "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, "no eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face," Job xxiv. 15. Reckoning himself secure if he can carry his wickedness under a vail of darkness, not caring what wickedness he doth, so he may do it undiscerned: It is not the acting of sin, but the discovery of it that puts them into terrors. So it is added with respect both to the adulterer and the thief, ver. 17. "The morning is to them as the shadow of "death, if one know them; they are in the terrors of the shadow of "death," i. e. If a man, especially a man in authority, a magistrate meet them, it is as if the image of death passed before them in a vision. So those idolators, Ezek. viii. 12. "Son of man, hast thou seen what "the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in "the house of his imagery? For they say, the Lord seeth it not." They conclude all is well, if nothing appear. This encouragement of secresy is the great argument by which Satan prevails with men to commit any sin that hath shame or danger attending it: But his promises of concealment are usually made good, as his promises of great wealth are to witches. This is the encouragement.

Secondly, Next I will make evident to you, that to sin upon this encouragement argues atheism in him that commits it. This is plain, for, did men believe the omnipresence and omniscience of God, such an encouragement to sin as secresy could have no force with them. Thus, when the ancients of Israel practised their idolatry in the dark, it is plain they thought God saw them not, Ezek. viii. 12. "For they "say, the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth;" i. e. They did not really believe God's omnipresence and omniscience. And Job tells us, chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. "That if he had beheld "the sun in his brightness," i. e. to admire and worship it as a god;

or, "his heart been secretly enticed, he should have denied the God "that is above." Every one that is enticed to sin upon the encouragement of secresy, doth so far deny the God that is above. If such a man did really believe there is a God that sees him, "whose eyes "are as flames of fire," Rev. i. 14. "To whom the darkness and "the light are both alike," Psal. cxxxix. 12. it were impossible he should be so terrified at the discovery of a creature, and so secure and wholly unconcerned at the discovery of God: It could not be that the observation of the great God should not so much trouble them, as the observation of a little child.

Thus we find the inward thoughts of men's hearts concerning God discovered by their bold attempts upon secret sins, Isa. xxxix. 15. "Wo to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, "and their works are in the dark; and they say, who seeth us, and "who knoweth us?" They think if their works are shrouded under a vail of darkness, they are safe enough; if they can escape the bar of an earthly god (a magistrate) they shall never be accountable at any other bar. We have another sad instance of the same impiety in Psal. lxxiii. 11. "And they say, how doth God know? And is "there knowledge in the Most High?" If men did not fancy to themselves there is no God, or (which is all one) that he is like unto themselves, one that cannot see in darkness, they could never encourage themselves as they do, to sin upon such a foolish pretence.

Thirdly, But my proper business in this place, is to prove, that these encouragements to sin are vain things: That no sinner can hide himself from the eye of God. This is plain both from scripture and reason.

The scripture speaks full home to this truth. Prov. v. 21. "The "ways of a man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his paths." To ponder or weigh our paths is more than simply to observe and see them. He not only sees the action, but puts it into the balances, with every circumstance belonging to it, and tries how much every ingredient in the action weighs, and what it comes to. So that God hath not only an *universal inspection* upon every action, but he hath a *critical inspection* into it also. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, "and by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3. So Jer. xiii. 25, 27. "Thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood: I have seen "thy adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms "and abominations; q. d. Thou forgettest there is a God in the heavens that beheld thee, and didst verily believe all was safe, because secret from man. In this falsehood or cheat put upon thee by the devil and thine own atheistical heart, *thou didst trust.* But I have seen thee, and all thy secret lewdness. It is a proverb among sinners, *Si non caste, tamen caute.* Carry the matter, if not honestly, yet warily: If thou hast a mind to sin, yet order it so that the world may be never the wiser. But how vain a thing is this? If men do not, the Lord doth see it; "I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord," Jer. xxix.

23. Thus the scripture speaks roundly and fully to the point in hand.

But because the atheism of the world is so great, and it is a hard thing to convince men of this great truth, so as to overawe them from any secret sin by it; I will, by rational arguments, demonstrate the truth to every man's conscience, and give you plain and full evidence, that how secretly soever men carry their sinful designs, yet the Lord must needs be privy to them; and it is impossible they should escape his cognizance.

1. For, *First*, He that formed all cannot but know all: the workman cannot be supposed to be ignorant of any part of his own work. Now God is the former of all things; every place and every person he hath made: where then shall the workers of iniquity hide themselves? You have the folly of sinners, in thinking to conceal themselves from the eye of God, convinced and reproved by this very argument, Isa. xxxix. 15, 16. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide "their counsels from the Lord, and their works are in the dark: and "they say, who seeth us? And who knoweth us? Surely, your "turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's "clay: for, shall the work say to him that made it, he made me not? "Or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he hath no "understanding?" q. d. Think ye by deep-laid designs, by the advantage of darkness, by the moulding and new-moulding your crafty designs in your heads, as the clay is moulded now unto this, then into the shape by the potter's hand, to hide it from me? O brutish creatures, and without understanding! am not I the God that formed you? And can it be supposed I should not know the most secret thoughts, plots, and designs of mine own creatures, who cannot contrive a design, nor conceive a thought with me? How absurd is this? Find out a place which God made not, or a creature which he formed not; and then your pretences to that creature's concealment from God in such a place, may have some colour: and this argument is again urged to convince the brutish atheist, Psal. xciv. 8, 9, 10. "Understand, ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when "will you be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? "He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chasteneth "the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man know-"ledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of "man, that they are vanity;" so that it is the vainest of all vanity in the world, to think of hiding your sins from the Lord.

2. He that sustains all cannot but know and discern all. You that seek to hide counsel from the Lord, know ye not, "That in him "you live, move, and have your being? Acts xvii. 28. Do not you derive that very power from him, which you abuse by sinning against him; And do you depend necessarily and continually upon God for all? Must he give you the power to move, and by that power can you move beyond him, and get out of his reach? You cannot think a thought without him, and yet can exclude him from those very

thoughts which you had no power to conceive, but from him? Exercise but common reason in the case, and it will hiss at your absurd designs.

3. He that governs all can be ignorant of nothing. There is a perpetual influence of providence, swaying and governing all the creatures, and all their actions; else the very ligaments of nature would crack, and the world break up and disband. This providence extends itself to the least and lowest of creatures and their actions, Luke xii. 6. a sparrow falls not to the ground without it. "The great God hath something to do about the most "minute *and inconsiderable things;" yea, the most contingent and uncertain things, as is the disposal of a lot, Prov. xvi. 33. And indeed this omniscience of God is that which is necessary to this universal government. How shall he rule that person, or in that place which he knows not? Indeed earthly governors may do so; it is not necessary they have a personal immediate cognizance of each place and person in their dominions: it is enough that they be virtually and mediately governed by them; but it is not so with God: it is necessary his eye should immediately see all the parts of his dominion. He could not rule the world, if he were not an omniscient God. Psal. lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold "the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves."

4. He that hath set a spy to observe and note what every man doth, cannot but know his actions, how secret soever they be. Now, so it is here; God sends a spy with you, to observe and record your most secret actions and thoughts, in every place, I mean your own consciences, from whose observation none of your ways can possibly be exempt. The sense of this made the heathen say, *Turpe quid ansurus te sine teste time.* When thou art attempting a sinful act, fear thyself without any other witness; conscience is privy to your most secret designs and thoughts; 1 Kings ii. 44. "Thou knowest all the "wickedness which thine heart (i. e. thy conscience) is privy to:" and if conscience know all, God must needs see and know it. So the apostle reasons, from the lesser to the greater, 1 John iii. 20. "If "our heart condemn us, (which is there put for conscience) God is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." If the spirit of a man knows the things of a man, much more he that formed that spirit, and endowed man with it.

5. He that knows things more secret and unsearchable than our most secret actions can be, must needs know them how secret soever they be. Now there are many things more close and secret than any action of ours can possibly be, and yet God knows them. The thoughts of the heart are more secret than any external action; so secret, that no creature can search them; the devil himself hath but a conjectural guess at them: "But the Lord telleth unto man what is his thought;" as in Amos iv. 13. So Jer. xvii. 10. "I the Lord search the heart, I

* *Deus maximus in minimus.*

" try the reins;" i. e. The most obscure, inward and deep secrets lodged in the heart; nay, which is more, he not only knows our thoughts when they are formed and conceived in the heart, but long before their conception; Psal. cxxxix. 2. " Thou knowest my " thoughts afar off." Divines generally interpret it from eternity; even so long before they were actually thought, he foreknew every thought we should think; and what can be imagined more secret and undiscernible, than a future thought.

Now if this be known to him, how much more are our thoughts formed into projects and designs, and these executed by external actions? O deceive not yourselves with hopes of secresy! Nothing can be a secret to him that knows the counsels of all hearts.

6. He that providentially brings to light the most secret contrivances of men, and publishes them before all Israel, and before the sun, must needs see them, and know them. How closely had Achan covered his wickedness: He never suspected a discovery, yet God brought it to light. With how much contrivance was the sin of David covered! yet God discovered it: " Thou didst this thing " secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun," 2 Sam. xii. 12. Histories abound with examples of God's bringing to light murders, so secretly committed, that it was impossible they should ever be revealed in this world, without a miracle of providence; and yet so they have been brought to light. Bessus, having committed such a murder, fancied the swallows that were chattering in the chimney had said, Bessus killed a man, and thereupon confessed the fact. How secure were the contrivers of the popish powder-plot, that Catholic villany, in a double sense having sworn all their accomplices to secresy, and managed the whole design so closely that Guy Faux, upon the discovery of it, said, *The devil must needs be the the discoverer of it.* How easy were it to expatiate upon this theme? But I will not be tiresome in instances: all ages are the witnesses of this truth. Who can then deny or question that great or confessed truth, Dan. ii. 28. " There " is a God in heaven that reveals secrets:" and if he reveals them, he must needs know them.

7. He that will judge all secrets, cannot but know them. " Now " God will judge the secrets of men in that great day," Rom. ii. 16. " God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, " whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl xii. *ult.* The Judge of the whole earth will not judge at random; his judgment will be infallible, because his omniscience is so. " His eyes are upon " the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; for he will not lay " upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment " with God," Job xxxiv. 21, 23.

So that the truth of this point is beyond all controversy and contradiction, that the whole world affords no place of secresy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye, and righteous hand of God

The uses follow in these inferences.

1. *Inference*, If this be so, then time, place, and opportunity, how much soever they seem to promise secresy and concealment, should never further a temptation to sin.

Suppose all circumstances concurring, so that in the eye of reason you seem secured from the shameful consequences of sin; yet, methinks, the consideration of this truth should sufficiently deter you from a wicked purpose; Prov. v. 20. "And why wilt thou, my son, be "ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a "stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, "and he pondereth all his goings." There be four things which strengthen temptations to sin, and particularly the sin of uncleanness upon seamen. *First*, The absence of lawful remedies. *Secondly*, The presence of alluring objects. *Thirdly*, The instigation of wicked examples. *Fourthly*, And the hopes of concealment, being remote from their acquaintance: so that their sins, in probability, shall never disgrace them. This last circumstance is not the least: O how many hath it prevailed upon! but I hope you will never yield to this temptation, whose heart and strength are broken by this consideration of the eye of God upon you. A chaste woman being once solicited to folly, told him that solicited her, she could never yield to the motion, until he could find a place where God should not see.

Nay, my friends, it should do more than restrain you from the gross acts of sin; it should powerfully curb the very thoughts and first motions of sin in your hearts. That was the use holy Job made of this truth, Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with mine eyes; "why then should I think upon a maid? Doth he not see my "ways, and count all my steps?"

Suppose you should carry your wickedness so close, that none on earth should know it; yet the Lord sees it, and will bring it into judgment, and your own conscience is privy to it. I pray, sirs, tell me, is it not a great comfort to a malefactor, that he acted his crime so closely, that none but the judge, and one authentic witness more, (whose testimony is as good as a thousand) beheld it? Why, this is the case of all secret sinners. But, to press home this great and necessary truth more particularly, I beseech you to consider,

1. God doth not only behold you, but beholds you with detestation and abhorrence in your ways of iniquity: It is a sight that grieves him to the heart, Gen. vi. 5, 6. "And the Lord saw the wicked-"ness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of "the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here was wickedness, great wickedness, breaking out externally, and evil, only evil, and that continually, working internally; so that both heart and life were evil extensively, intensively, and protensively. This the Lord saw; and how it affected him, the sixth verse tells you: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; "and it grieved him at the heart:" Ah! it cuts him to the heart

to see your sinful hearts and courses. Nothing can be so contrary to the pure and holy nature of God as this is: this made the prophet admire how his patience could endure such a sight, Heb. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look "upon iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal trea- "cherously?" &c. As if he should say, Lord, how canst thou behold thyself affronted by vile creatures, and hold thy hands from avenging it? O the stupendous patience of God!

2. It doth not only grieve him to the heart, but it puts his patience to the greatest trial and exercise in beholding it: therefore he is said "to endure with much long-suffering," Rom. ix. 22. It doth, as it were, create a conflict betwixt his patience and justice: he is so provoked by your sin, that he expresses it as a difficulty to bear it, Amos ii. 13. "I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is "full of sheaves:" burdened till the axle-tree of infinite patience be ready to crack under the weight.

Nay, *Thirdly*, He doth not only see your evils, but he registers and records them, in order to a day of reckoning with you for all together, except ye repent; Deut. xxxii. 34. "Is not this laid up "in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?" A metaphor taken from the clerk of the assize, who seals up the bag of indictments against the time of trial. You think if you can blind the eyes of men, all is well, you shall hear no more of it: ah! but it is sealed up among God's treasures; i. e. the things he records and reserves for the day of account.

4. God doth not only see you, but he will also one day make you see yourselves and your ways, and that with horror and consternation. You think you shall taste nothing but the sweet and pleasure of sin; but how are you deceived? The days are coming when sin, that is now pleasant, shall be turned into wormwood and gall. You will not see the evil of it; and because you see it not, you think God doth not. "These things (saith God) hast thou done, and I kept "silence, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as "thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before "thine eyes," Psal. l. 21. God sees them now, and he will make you see them too, by opening your eyes in this world graciously, or in that to come judicially.

5. God doth not only see your ways, but he will make all the world see them too: For, "there is nothing hid that shall not be "revealed, nor covered, that shall not be made known," Matth. x. 26. "There is a day when God will make manifest the hidden "counsels of the heart," 2 Cor. iv. 5. "When that which hath been "spoken in darkness shall be heard in light; and that which ye "have spoken in the ears in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the "house tops," Luke xii. 3. Well then, whenever the occasions and opportunities of sin are presented to you, under this encouragement of security, I beseech you remember this truth, that no place

can hide you from the eye of God. He sees all your ways, yea, he sees them with abhorrence; the sight of them is the greatest exercise of his patience. His sight of them is not a transient glance, but he sees and records your evils; they are sealed up among his treasures: He sees, and will make you see them too with horror, when he shall set them in order before you: he sees them, and will make angels and men see them in the great day. O then, never let secresy any more encourage you to sin!

2. *Inference.* What prodigious sinners must they be, that seek no covert from their sin in darkness, but with an impudent face declare, yea, glory in their shame; who are not ashamed to sin openly with a bare face, and a whore's forehead? These are sinners of the first magnitude. "They declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not," Isa. iii. 9. It is as natural to man to endeavour to hide his sin, as Adam, and you see from the text, guilty sinners fain would, if it were possible, fly to any obscure corner from the observation of God and men; and it is a mercy God hath planted such an affection as shame is, in the soul of man, to be a bridle to restrain his exorbitant lusts. But yet there is a generation of monstrous sinners, who have so far unmanned themselves, "That they are not at all ashamed "when they commit abominations, neither can they blush," Jer. vi. 15. If there be any remains of shame left in them, they exercise it upon a wrong object: they are ashamed of that which would be to their glory, and glory in that which is their shame; they add impudence to their sin, and blush not to proclaim that which others study to conceal.

Such a vile temper as this shews a man even ripe for wrath; he hath even filled up his measure, and is come to the very culminating point and top of wickedness. There be some men arrived to such a degree of holiness, that all that converse with them judge them even ripe for heaven: they speak the dialect, and have the very savour of heaven upon them. Others are come to such a prodigious height of impiety, that understanding men cannot but conclude they are nigh unto damnation; they speak the very language, and have the very scent of hell upon them. Such are they that openly declare their sin as Sodom, and glory in their shame.

Thus we see some drunkards will glory in their strength, to pour down wine and strong drink, and can boast of the number of their cups: some adulterers can glory in their acts of wickedness, not suffering themselves to damn their own souls, but labouring to infect and corrupt as many as they can by their filthy tongues, that they may draw them into the same misery. We can hardly tell how to screw up sin one peg higher than this: first to practise sin, then defend it, then boast of it. Sin is first a man's burden, next his custom, next his delight, and then his excellency. Lord, whither is man fallen! that holiness should ever be his disgrace; and sin, yea, the vilest of sins, his glory! O the power of Divine patience!

3. *Inference.* If the eye of God searches every obscure corner in the world, to behold the evil that is committed there, then certainly the eye of God cannot but look into every secret place in the world to see the good that is done there. "The eyes of the Lord are in "every place, beholding the evil and the good," Prov. xv. 3. The good as well as the evil; yea, he beholds with delight the good done in secret.

As some sinners seek corners to act their wickedness in, and cannot satisfy themselves to commit sin in the light, (for, as our Saviour saith, John iii. 20. "He that doth evil hateth the light;") so, on the contrary, a truly godly man seeks corners to pray in, to meditate in, and to examine his own heart in, and thinks these duties of godliness can never be managed with too great a privacy; not that he is in the least ashamed of his duty; no, that is not the reason, but he is afraid of hypocrisy, when duties lie too open, and exposed to the eyes of men. A sinner takes his full liberty to vent his corruptions when he can do it in secret; and a saint takes his full liberty to vent and exercise his graces, when no eye but the eye of God sees him. "Thou, when thou prayest (saith our Saviour) enter into thy closet "and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret, and "thy Father (which seeth in secret) shall reward thee openly." O how much better is it, both as to your present comfort and future account, to get into a corner to pray, than to whore and drink? To pour out your souls to God graciously, than to pour out your lusts against God so wickedly? How contrary are the principles of grace and corruption? The study of sinners is to hide their evils from the eyes of men: the study of a saint is to hide his duties from the eyes of men: The sinner would not have the world suspect what he hath been about; nor would the saint have all the world know what he hath been about. The way of an adulterer is as the "way of an "eagle in the air, or as a serpent upon a rock;" i. e. a secret way, where they leave no prints or tracts behind them. "So is the way "of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and "saith, I have done no wickedness," Prov. xxx. 19, 20. By wiping the mouth is there meant preventing all suspicion; suffering no sign of the action to remain upon them: So, contrarily, a gracious person that hath been with God in secret prayer, or fasting, when his duty is ended, he labours to avoid all ostentations. And therefore you have the caution from Christ, Matth. vi. 17, 18. "But thou, when "thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face! that thou appear "not unto men to fast, but unto thy father which is in secret." The meaning is, carry thy private duties so close, that none may know what passeth between God and thee: When thou hast been entertained in secret with hidden *manna*, a feast of fat things, wipe thy mouth in a holy sense, i. e. wipe off all suspicion of hypocrisy and vanity by a

prudent and humble concealment. * "Religion doth not lay all open, as we say:" As sinners have their secret pleasures, their stolen waters which are sweet to them; so the saints have their secret delights in God, their hidden *manna*, which no man knows but he that eateth of it. And as the eye of God vindictively beholds the one, so it delightfully beholds the other; and so you find it, Cant. ii. 14. "O my dove, (saith Christ to the church) that art in the clefts of "the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs: Let me see thy coun- "tenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy "countenance comely." Let this encourage you to secret duties; let not others find more pleasure in secret lusts, than you can do in God and secret duties.

4. *Inference.* Doth the eye of God see all the evil and wickedness that is committed in all the secret corners of the world! How admirable then is the patience of God towards the world! Who can imagine how much wickedness is secretly practised in a town or city every day? Or if all the villanies that are perpetrated in a small circumference in one day were known to us, we should admire that God doth not make us like Sodom, for judgment and desolation before the next day. What then are the innumerable swarms of sin, which are as the sands upon the sea-shore, from all the parts and corners of the earth! Alas, there is not the ten thousandth part of the grosser sort of wickednesses committed in the world, that ever comes to our eye or ear; and if it did, we cannot estimate the evil of sin, as God doth; nor feel with that resentment the burden of it, as he doth: and yet the long-suffering God forbears it with infinite patience. Surely his power was not more discovered in making the world, than it is in forbearing to destroy it again for the wickedness that is in it. But the world stands for the church's sake that is in it. "And were it "not that the Lord of hosts had left us a small remnant, we had "been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrha," Isa. i. 9. There is also an elect remnant to be called and gathered by the gospel out of it in their several generations: and when that number shall be accomplished, God will set fire to the four quarters of it, and it shall lie in white ashes; till then the long-suffering of God waiteth.

5. *Inference.* If God sees all the secret wickedness that is committed in every corner of the world; how clear is it that there is a judgment to come, and that this judgment will be exact?

That there is a judgment to come, is by this manifest; and also that there is abundance of sin committed in the world, which never comes to light here, nor never will in this world. It is true, men's sins are open; and the judgments of God upon them are as open; but it is not so with all. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 24. "Some "men's sins are open before-hand, going before-hand to judgment, "and some men's they follow after." Some men's sins are written,

* *Non est religio ubi omnia patent.*

as it were, in their foreheads, every one sees them; but others follow after, are not discovered till the day of the revelation of the secrets of all hearts, and then that which is now done in closets shall be proclaimed as upon house-tops: Though they were never put to shame for their sins, in the places where they committed them, yet God will shame them before men and angels. This is the day to judge secrets, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

And, as it is certain there will be such a judgment, so it is certain this judgment will be exact; for the judge of all hath seen all: Whatever he charges any man with, hath been acted before his face, Psal. xc. 8. "Thou settest our secret sins in the light of thy coun-"tenance." Here can be no mistake, the omnipotent God will judge for what he hath seen; "For his eyes are upon the ways of "man, and he seeth all his goings, for he will not lay upon man "more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God." The meaning is, he cannot mistake in his judgment being omniscient, and having seen all the ways of man; so that there can be no plea offered by any man for the reverse of his sentence.

O then let us be exact and careful, as well in our secret as in our public actions; for God shall bring every work in judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. *ult.*

6. *Inference.* Lastly, if the eye of God be in every place upon us, and all our actions; then let those whose condition of life hath sent them out of the eyes and observations of their parents and masters keep the sense of God's eye upon their hearts, as ever they would escape sin and ruin.

It is no small advantage to young unprincipled persons, to live under the discipline of pious and careful governors; but it often falls out, that they are early transplanted into another soil, sent into foreign countries in order to their education or employment; and as often are there corrupted and debauched by the evil examples of the places where they reside; they learn another language, or drive another trade than what their parents or masters designed them for. But if the sense of this great truth might accompany them where-ever they are, O what a sovereign antidote might it prove against those deadly poisons of temptations! This alone would be a suffieient preservative. If our children and servants have but the awful sense of God's eye upon them, we may turn them loose into the wide world without fear.

If Providence shall direct this discourse to your hands, my heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the Spirit of the Lord would imprint this great truth upon your hearts. And I am the more moved to endeavour your preservation, upon the consideration of the apparent danger you are in, and the manifold disappointments and mischiefs that must unavoidably follow the corrupting of your tender years. The danger you are in is great, whether you consider,

First, The infecting, catching nature of sin. No plague is more infectious and insinuating than sin is. Many are the wiles, devices, stratagems, and baits, Satan lays to draw you into sin, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Or,

Secondly, The proneness that is in your own nature to close with the offers and temptations that you are tried with; it is as great a wonder if you escape, as that one that lives in a pest-house should remain healthy; or that dry tinder should not catch, when thousands of sparks fly about, and light upon it. Or,

Thirdly, The absence of all those means by which you have formerly been preserved from sin. You are now without the ordinances of God, the family duties, the admonitions, counsels, examples, and observations of your parents, masters, and friends: All which have been of great use to keep you from sin, and repress the vanities of youth. Or, Lastly,

Fourthly, The manifold furtherance or temptations which your age afford; *Childhood and youth are vanity.* Inconsiderateness, rashness, injudiciousness, and the want of experience, do all cast you into the very snare. See how the Holy Ghost hath signified the danger of persons at your age, in Prov. vii. 7.

All these things do greatly endanger you. And if any, or all of them together, prevail to the vitiating and corrupting of you, then what a train of sad consequences will follow upon it! For,

1. The great God will be dishonoured and reproached by you, even that God whose distinguishing mercies are now before your eyes, and should be admired by you; that caused you to spring up in a better soil, and not from idolaters in a land of darkness.

2. Conscience will be wounded and polluted with guilt; and though, at present, you feel not the remorse and gnawings of it, yet now you are preparing for it. The sins of youth are complaints and sorrows of old age, Job xiii. 26.

3. The hearts of your friends, if godly, will be grieved and greatly troubled to find their expectations and hopes disappointed; and all those prayers for you, and counsels bestowed on you to come to nothing. If an unequal match by Esau was such a grief of heart to Isaac and Rebecca, what will profaneness and uncleanness be to your parents? Gen. xxvi. 34.

4. The serviceableness and comfort of your whole life, will, in all probability, be destroyed by the corruption of your youth. If blossoms be withered, and buds nipt, what fruit can be expected? To conclude,

5. Your precious and immortal souls are hazarded to all eternity. And "what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose "his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matth. xvi. 26.

All this mischief may be happily prevented by the serious conside-

ration of this point you have now been reading. For if God shall fix that truth in your hearts by faith, then,

First, Instead of running with others into the same excess of riot, you will keep yourselves pure and unspotted in an unclean defiling world. You will answer all temptations to sin, as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Secondly, Instead of joining with others in sin, you will mourn for the sins of others. You will say with David, Psal. cxx. 5. "Woe "is me, that I sojourn in Meshec, that I dwell in the tents of Ke- "dar!" Your soul, like Lot's, will be vexed from day to day with the filthy conversations of the wicked, 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

Thirdly, Instead of returning to your country with a wounded name and conscience, you will return full of inward comfort and peace, and to the joy of all your friends and relations.

Fourthly, To conclude, You will give fair encouragements to the expectations of all that know you, of becoming useful instruments of the glory of God, and benefit of the world in your generation. O therefore beg of God that this truth may be deeply engraven upon your hearts.

THE

SUCCESSFUL SEAMAN.

SERMON IV.

DEUT. viii. 17, 18.

And thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord God; for he it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.

THIS context contains a necessary and very seasonable caution to the Israelites, who were now passing out of the wilderness straits into the rich and fruitful land of Canaan, which abounded with all earthly blessings and comforts. Now, when the Lord was about to give them possession of this good land, he first gives them some wholesome caveats to prevent the abuse of these mercies. He knew how apt they were to forget him in a prosperous estate, and ascribe all their comfortable fruition to their own prudence and valour: to prevent this, he reminds them of their former estate, and warns them about their future estate: he reminds them of their former condition, whilst they subsisted upon his immediate care in the wilderness; verses 15, 16. "Who lead them through the great and terrible wil-

" derness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and drought, " where there was no water:" here were their dangers and wants. " Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint, who fed " thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not:" here were their supplies in these straits. " That he might humble " thee, and that he might prove thee to do thee good at thy latter " end:" here was the wise and gracious design of God in all this.

But wherein did God humble them by feeding them with manna? Were they not shrewdly humbled (saith Mr. Gurnal, vol. II. p. 345. an ingenious author) to be fed with such a dainty dish, which had God for its cook, and was called angels food for its delicacy? It was not the meanness of the fare, but the manner of having it, by which God intended to humble them. The food was excellent, but they had it from hand to mouth; so that God kept the key of their cupboard, they stood to his immediate allowance; this was an humbling way. But now the dispensation of Providence was just upon the change; they were going to a land, " where they should eat bread " without scarceness," verse 9. and have their comforts in a more natural, stated, and sensible way; and now would be the danger. Therefore,

He not only reminds them of their formere state, but in this text cautions them about their future estate, " Say not in thy heart, my " power, or the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth," *&c.* In this caution we have these two things especially to observe:

I. The false cause of their prosperity removed.

II. The true and proper cause thereof asserted.

1. The false cause removed: " Not their power, or the might of " their hand." That is said to be gotten by the hand, which is gotten by our wisdom as well as labour: head-work, and wit-work, are hand-work in the sense of this text. It cannot be denied but they were a great people, prudent, industrious, and had an excellent polity among them: but yet, though they had all these natural external means of enriching themselves in that fertile soil, God will, by no mean, allow them to ascribe their success and wealth to any of these causes: for alas! what are all these without his blessing?

2. The true and proper cause asserted: " It is the Lord that gives " thee power to get wealth;" i. e. All thy care, labour, wisdom, strength, signify nothing without him; it is not your pains, but his blessing, that makes your designs to prosper: and therefore in all your prosperity, still acknowledge him as the Author of all. Hence note,

Doct. *That the prosperity and success of our affairs are not to be ascribed to our own abilities, but to the blessing of God upon our lawful endeavours.*

We find two proverbs. in one chapter, that seem to differ in the account they give of this matter; and indeed they do but seem so. It is said, Prov. x. 4. " The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" ascribing riches and prosperity to human diligence. And verse 22.

"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich." But these two are not really opposed to each other, but the one subordinated to the other. The diligent hand, with God's blessing upon it, makes rich; neither of them alone, but both conjoined. A diligent hand cannot make rich without God's blessing; and God's blessing doth not ordinarily make rich without a diligent hand. And these two are put together in their proper places, 1 Chron. xxii. 16. "Up and be doing, and the Lord be with "you." It is a vain pretence for any man to say, If the Lord be with me, I may sit still, and do nothing; and a wicked one to say, If I am up and doing, I shall prosper whether God be with me or not. The sluggard would fain prosper without diligence, and the atheist hopes to prosper by his diligence alone: but Christians expect their prosperity from God's blessing, in the way of honest diligence.

Faith must not stifle industry, nor industry blind faith.

It is a common thing for men to benumb their own arms, and make them as dead and useless by leaning too much upon them: so it is in a moral as well as a natural way: all the prudence and pains in the world avail nothing without God. So saith the Psalmist, in Psal. cxxvii. 2. "It is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, "to eat the bread of sorrow, for so he giveth his beloved sleep."

A man would think, he that rises betimes fares hard, works hard, sits up late, cannot but be a thriving man; and probably he would be so, if God's blessing did second his diligence and frugality. But the Psalmist intends it of diligence in a separate sense; a diligent hand working alone, and then it is all in vain, and serves only to confirm the common proverb—*Early up and never the nearer.* Labour without God cannot prosper; and labour against God will not only destroy itself, but the labourer too.

Now, that this is really so as the doctrine states it, I shall endeavour to make evident.

1. By a general demonstration of the whole matter.

2. By a particular enumeration of the ordinary causes and means of all success, which are all dependent upon the Lord's blessing.

First, That success in business is not in the power of our hand, but in the hand of Providence to dispose it as he pleases, and to whom he pleases, appears by this, 'That Providence sometimes blasts and 'frustrates the most prudent and well-laid designs of men; and in 'the mean time succeeds and prospers more weak and improbable 'ones.' What is more common in the observation of all ages than this? One man shall toil as in the fire, for very vanity; run to and fro, plot and study all the ways in the world to get an estate, deny back and belly, and all will not do: he shall never be able to attain what he strives after, but his designs shall be still fruitless. Another hath neither a head to contrive, nor a hand to labour as the former hath: nor doth he torture his brains about it, but manages his affairs

with less judgment, and spends fewer thoughts about it, and yet success follows it. It shall be cast in upon some, who as they did not, so, considering the weak management of their business, had little rational encouragement to expect it; and fly from others, who industriously pursue it in the prudent choice and diligent use of all the proper means of attaining it. And this is not only an observation grounded upon our own experience, but confirmed by the wisest of men; Eccl. ix. 11. "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the "race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet "bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet "favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." If two men run for a prize, reason gives the prize to the swiftest: if two armies join battle, reason gives the victory to the strongest: if two men undertake a design to get wealth, reason gives the riches to the wisest; yea, but Providence sometimes disposes it quite contrary to the verdict of reason, and the prize is given to the slowest, the victory to the weakest, the estate to the more shallow capacity; so that these events seem to fall out rather casually than answerably to the means employed about them. And who that observes this, can doubt but it is the hand of God's providence, and not our diligence that disposes the issues of these things? For why doth God so often step out of the ordinary way, and cross his hands, as old Israel did, laying the right hand upon the younger, and the left upon the elder: I mean, give success to the weak, and disappointment to the strong, but to convince us of this great truth which I here bring it to confirm? And because men are so apt to sacrifice to their own prudence, and disown providence, therefore it sometimes makes the case much plainer than so: it denies riches to the industrious, that live for no other end but to get them, and casts them in upon those that seek them not at all, and indeed are scarcely competent for business. Aristides, one of the wisest men of his age, was yet still so poor, that Plutarch said, it brought a slur upon justice herself, as if she were not able to maintain her followers. Socrates, one of the prime Grecian sages, was so exceeding poor, that Apuleius could not but note, "That "*poverty* was become an inmate with *philosophy**;" when in the mean time, the empty, shallow, and foolish, shall come up with it, and overtake it without any pains at all, which others prosecute in the most rational course all their life, and all to no purpose. Thus it was noted of pope Clement V. *None more rich, none more foolish.* †And this is the ground of that proverb, *Fortuna favet fatiis: Fortune favours fools.* Though the author of that proverb, in nick-naming providence, shewed as little wisdom as he that is the subject of it.

By all which, this point is in the general made good: it is not industry, but providence, that directs and commands the success of

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* *Paupertas est philosophica vernacula.*

† *Epitom. Hist. Gallic.*

business: It being much in the attaining of riches, as the apostle saith it is in the obtaining of righteousness: "The Gentiles, which "followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness; "but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not "attained to the law of righteousness," Rom. ix. 30, 31. So it is here, for the vindication of the honour of providence, which men would scarcely own, if it did not thus baffle them sometimes: they that follow the world cannot obtain it; and they attain it that follow it not; that all men may see their good is not in their own hand; and lest man, who is not only a covetous creature, and would engross all to himself, but as proud as covetous, should ascribe all to himself. But this will further appear,

Secondly, By a particular enumeration of the ordinary causes and means of all success in business, which are all dependent things upon a higher cause.

Now, if we proceed upon a rational account, we shall find five things required to the success of our affairs: and that I may speak to your capacity, I will instance in that affair of merchandizing in which you are employed, as the hands that execute what the heads of your merchants contrive; and will shew you, that neither their wisdom in contriving, nor your skill and industry in managing their designs, can prosper without the leave and blessing of Divine Providence. Let us therefore consider what is necessary to the raising of an estate in that way of employment; and you will find, that in a rational and ordinary way, success cannot be expected, unless,

1. The designs and projects be prudently laid, and moulded with much consideration and foresight. An error here is like an error in the first concoction, which is not to be rectified afterwards. "The "wisdom of the prudent (saith Solomon) is to understand his way;" that is, to understand, and thoroughly to consider, the particular designs and business in which he is to engage. Rashness and inconsiderateness here hath been the ruin of many thousand enterprizes. And if a design be never so well laid, yet,

2. No success in business can be rationally expected, except there be an election of proper instruments to manage it. The best laid design in the world may be spoiled by an ill management. If the person employed be either incapable or unfaithful, what but trouble and disappointment can be expected? "He that sendeth a message "(saith Solomon) by the hands of a fool, cutteth off the legs, and "drinketh damage." It is as if a man should send him on his business that had no legs to go; i. e. one that is incompetent for the business he is employed about. All that a man shall reap from such a design is damage: and if the instrument employed be never so capable, yet if be he not also faithful to the trust committed to him, all is lost; and such is the depth of deceit in the hearts of men, that few or none can be secured against it. Solomon was the wisest of men, and yet fatally miscarried in this matter; "He seeing the young man

" (Jeroboam) that he was a mighty man of valour, and that he was " industrious, made him ruler over all the charge of the house of " Joseph," 1 Kings xi. 28. And this was the man that rent the kingdom from his son, even ten tribes from the house of David. And yet,

3. Let designs be projected with the greatest prudence, and committed to the management of the fittest instrument; all is nothing as to success, without the concurrence of health, strength, favourable winds, security from the hands of enemies, and perils of the deep. If any of these be wanting, the design miscarries, and all our projects fail. How often are hopeful and thriving undertakings frustrated by the failure of any one of these requisites? " Go to now, ye that " say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and remain " there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know " not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is " even a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth " away," Jam. iv. 13, 14. How soon are the purposes of men's hearts broken off, and their thoughts perish in one day? They think to send or go to such a place, and there enrich themselves, and return prosperous; but sometimes death, sometimes captivity, sometimes cross winds, dash all their hopes.

4. Proper seasons must be observed, else all success and expectation of increase is lost. " There is (saith Solomon) a season for every " thing, and a time to every purpose under the sun," Eccles. iii. 1. This being taken, gives facility and speedy dispatch to a business; and therefore he gives this reason, why man miscarries so frequently, and is disappointed in his enterprizes because he knows not the time; Eccl. ix. 11. 'He comes (as one saith) when the bird is flown.' It is a wise and weighty proverb with the Greeks, 'That there is much 'time in a short opportunity!' That is, a man hitting the season of a business, may do more in a day, than losing it, he may be able to do in a year. This is of a special consideration in all human affairs, and is the very hinge upon which success turns: So that to come before, is to pluck apples before they are ripe; and to come after it, is to seek them when they are fallen and perished.

5. Lastly, in getting wealth the leaks of our estates must be stopped; else we do but put it into a bag with holes, as the prophet's phrase is in Hag. i. 9. If a man lose as much one way as he gets another, there can be no increase. Hence it is, that many are kept low and poor all their days: If one design prospers, yet another miscarries; or, if all succeed well abroad, yet there is a secret consumption of it at home, by prodigality, riot, luxury, or a secret curse upon it, which the scripture calls *God's blowing upon it*, Hag. i. 3. If therefore by any of these ways our gains moulder away, we do but disquiet ourselves in vain, and labour in the fire for very vanity. Thus you see what things are requisite to the advancement of an estate upon a prudential account.

Now let us particularly observe what a dependance there is upon Providence in all these things; and then it will be clear that our good is not in our hand, nor success at our beck, but it is the Lord that gives us power to get wealth. For,

As to the moulding and projecting of a design, we may say, both of the prudent merchant and ingenious seaman, what the prophet doth of the husbandman, Isa. xxviii. 10. "It is his God that in-"structs him to discretion, and teacheth him." There is, indeed, a spirit in man, "But it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth "understanding," Job xxxii. 8. The faculty is man's, but the light of wisdom, whether natural or spiritual, is God's: and the natural faculty is of itself no more capable of directing us in our affairs, without his teaching, than the dial is to inform us of hours without the sun's shining upon it. And because men are so dull in apprehending, and backward in acknowledging it, but will lean to their own understandings, thence it is that prudent designs are so often blasted, and weaker ones succeeded.

And no less doth Providence manifest itself in directing to, and prospering the means and instruments employed in our business: it is of the Lord that they prove ingenious, active and faithful servants to us; that your factors abroad prove not malefactors to you; that every design is not ruined by the negligence, ignorance, or treachery of them that manage it. If God qualify men to be fit instruments to serve you, and then providentially direct you to them, his hand is thankfully to be owned in both. It was no small mercy to Abraham, that he had so discreet, pious, and faithful a servant to manage even his weightest affairs so prudently and prosperously for him. Laban, Pharaoh, and Jethro, never so prospered, as when Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, had the charge of their business. Laban ingenuously acknowledged, "That he had learned by experience that the Lord had bles-"sed him for Jacob's sake," Gen. xxx. 27. A heathen you see is more ingenuous in owning the mercy of God to him in this case, than many professed Christians are, who sacrifice all to their own net, and burn incense to their drag, i. e. idolize the means and instruments of their prosperity, and see nothing of God in it.

And then as to the preservation of those that go down into the sea to do our business in the great waters; who can but acknowledge this to be the peculiar work of God? Doth not daily experience shew how often poor seamen are cut off in the prosecution of our designs, sometimes by sickness, sometimes by storms, and sometimes by enemies, to whom they become a prey? If they escape all these, yet how often do they lie wind-bound, or hindered by cross accidents, till the proper season be over, and the design lost? Certainly, if providence shall so far favour men, as to prevent all these; command winds fit for their purpose, restrain enemies, preserve life, and carry them safely and seasonably to their ports, it deserves a thankful ac-

knowledgment; and those that do not acknowledge providence, do disoblige it.

Lastly, Who is it that stops the leaks in your estates, prevents the wasting of your substance, and secures to you what you possess? Is it not the Lord? How many fair estates moulder away insensibly, and come to nothing! Certainly, as there is a secret blessing in some families, so that themselves can scarce give any account how they are provided for, so there is a secret blast and consumption upon others, which brings poverty upon them like an armed man. And this is the true sense of that scripture, Hag. i. 6. "Ye have sown much, and "bring in little. Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but are "not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but are not warm; and he "that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes;" or, as in the Hebrew, a *bag pierced, or bored through;* what goes in at one end, goes out at another, and so all labour is lost; nothing stays with them to do them good. So that it is an undeniable truth, that *prosperity* and *success* are not to be ascribed to our abilities, but to the blessing of God upon our lawful endeavours.

1. *Inference.* And if so, how are they justly reprovable, that wholly depend upon means in the neglect of providence; that never eye God, nor acknowledge him in any of their ways? This is a very great evil, and highly provoking to the Lord; it is the fruit and discovery of the natural Atheism of the hearts of men. How confident are men of success and prosperity, when second causes lie for it, and smile upon them? And, on the contrary, how dejected and heartless when they seem to lie cross to their hopes? O how few consider and believe that great truth, Eccl. ix. 1. "That the righteous, and the "wise, and their works are in the hand of God!" To be in the hand of God, noteth both their subjection to his power, and to his directive providence. Whether your works be in your hand, or put out of your hand, they always are in God's hand to prosper or frustrate them at his pleasure.

Foolish man decreeth events without the leave of Providence: as if he were absolute lord of his own actions, and their success. Indeed, you may then speak of success, when you have asked God's leave; Job xxii. 28. "Acquaint thyself with God, then shalt thou decree a "thing, and it shall be established." But your confidence in the means, whilst God is neglected, will surely be followed either with a disappointment or a curse. For what is this but to labour without God, yea, to labour against God? For so do all they that give the glory of God to the creature: that set the instrumental and subordinate in the place of the principal efficient cause. It is just with God to deny you your comfort in those things wherein you rob him of his glory.

2. *Inference.* How vain and unreasonable are the proud boasts of men, in the midst of their successes and prosperity! If God be the sole author of it, and it is not in your power, nor the might of your

hand, that hath gotten you this wealth; why do you glory in it, as if it were the effect and fruit of your own prudence and industry? How soon do the spirits of men rise with their estates? How haughtily do they look? How proudly do they speak? What a sensible change of temper doth this small change of condition work? it is an exceeding hard thing to keep down the heart when providence exalteth a man's estate. *Magnæ fœlicitatis est, a fœlicitate non vinci*, saith Austin, It is a great felicity not to be overcome by felicity. That man is surely rich in grace, whose graces suffer no eclipse by his riches. It is as hard to be prosperous and humble, as to be afflicted and cheerful. But to keep down thy heart in times of success and prosperity, I will offer thee, reader, a few humbling considerations about this matter.

1. And the first is this: Though providence do succeed and prosper thy earthly designs, yet this is no argument at all of the love of God to thy soul: thou mayest be the object of his hatred and wrath for all this. No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him, Eccl. ix. 1. How weak an evidence for heaven must that be, which millions now in hell have had in a greater measure than you have? The least drachm of grace is a better pledge of happiness, than the greatest sum of gold and silver that ever lay in any man's treasury. Externals distinguish not internals? you cannot so much as guess what a man's spiritual estate is, by the view of his temporal. Ishmael was a very great man, the head of a princely family, but, for all that, excluded from the covenant, and all its spiritual blessings, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. He that reads the lxxiii. Psalm, and the xxi. of Job, will plainly see how wretched a case that man is in, who hath no better evidence for the love of God than this amounts to.

2. Be not proud of outward prosperity and success; for providences are very changeable in these things; yea, it daily rings the changes all the world over. Many a greater estate than yours, and every way as well, yea, far better secured to the eye of reason, hath he scattered in a moment. It is the saying of a philosopher, speaking of the estates of merchants and seamen, *Non amo fœlicitatem e funibus pendentem;* I like not that happiness that hangs upon ropes. I need not here cite *histories*, to confirm this truth: there is none of you but can abundantly confirm it to yourselves, if you will but recollect those instances and examples which have fallen within your time and remembrance. It is a poor happiness that may leave a man more miserable to-morrow, than he that never arrived to what you have, can be.

3. Pride not yourselves in your success; for as providences are very changeable, so the change seems very nigh to you, when your heart is thus lifted up, especially if you be such, to whose eternal happiness God hath any special regard: to be sure he will pull down that proud heart, and quickly order humbling providences to that end: "He "looketh upon every one that is proud, to abase him," Job xl. 11. The heart of good Hezekiah was tickled with vain-glory, and he must needs shew the king of Babylon's servants all his treasures, and pre-

cious things; and at that time came the prophet Isaiah to him with a sad message from the Lord, that all these treasures, in which he had gloried, must be carried to Babylon, Isa. xxxix. If you hope comfortably to enjoy the good of providence, provoke it not by such vain ostentations. It is an ingenious note, even of an heathen,

Tu quoque fac timeas, et quæ tibi læta videntur,
Dum loqueris, fieri tristia posse, puta. Ovid.

Exercise fear in prosperity, and think with thyself, when thy heart is most affected with it, that whilst the boast is in thy lips, the scene may alter, and thy happiness be turned into sorrow. Whilst that proud boast was in the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, the voice from heaven told him, "His kingdom was departed from him, Dan. iv. 30, 31. Pride shews, that prosperity, which feeds it, to be at its vertical point.

3. *Inference.* If success in business be from the Lord, then certainly the true way to prosperity is to commend our affairs to God by prayer. He takes the true way to thrive, that engages God's blessing upon his endeavours. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust "also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," Psal. xxxvii. 4. It is a vile thing for any man to grudge that time that is spent in prayer, as so much time lost in his business. But having pressed this point before, I shall add no more here.

4. *Inference.* Doth all success and prosperity depend upon, and come from God? Then let it be faithfully employed to his glory. "If it be of him, and through him," then there is all the reason in the world it should "be to him," Rom. xi. 36. You do but give him of his own, as David speaks; "All this store cometh of thine hand, "and is thine own," 1 Chron. xxix. 16. He never intended your estates for the gratifying of your lusts, but to give you a larger capacity thereby of honouring him in the use of them. O consider, when God hath prospered your estates abroad, and you return successfully home, how you have an opportunity of honouring God, and evidencing your sense of his goodness to you, by relieving the poor with a liberal and cheerful charity; by encouraging the gospel, and making them partakers of your good things, who labour for your souls, and dispense better things to you than you can return to them. I would not here be mis-interpreted, as though I pleaded my own interest, under a pretence of pleading God's; no! God forbid; I am well satisfied with a capacity of doing any good, how little soever I receive; nor can many of you reap the fruit of my labours: but I would not leave you ignorant, or regardless of so great and plain a duty as this is: you are bound to this retribution, by a plain and positive precept, Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word, com-"municate to him that teacheth, in all good things." You are obliged to do it, proportionably to the success God gives you in your trade, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And when you have so done, not to think it

any great matter, 1 Cor. ix. 11. but the discharge of a plain and necessary duty.

5. *Inference.* Let not your hearts be satisfied with all the success and increase of the world, except your souls thrive as well as your bodies, and your eternal concerns prosper as well as your temporal. It was a pious wish of St. John for Gaius his host, "That he might "prosper, and be in health, even as his soul prospered," 3 Epist. John, ver. 2. But it were to be wished, that your souls did but prosper as your bodies and estates do. It is a poor comfort to have an increasing estate, and a dead and declining soul. When a considerable present was sent to Luther, he earnestly protested, God should not put him off with these things. O friends! I beseech you take not up in these enjoyments!

6. *Inference. Lastly,* If God be the author of all your success, how prodigious an evil is it to make your prosperity an instrument of dishonouring him that gave it; to abuse the estates providence gives you, to rioting and drunkenness? Do you thus requite the Lord! is this the thanks you give him for all his care over you! and kindness to you! you would never be able to bear that from another, which God bears from you. If God do you good, O do not return him evil for it!

THE

DISAPPOINTED SEAMAN.

SERMON V.

LUKE v. 5.

Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.

THESE words are the reply made by Peter unto Christ, who, in the former verse, had commanded him to "launch out into the "deep, and let down the nets for a draught." Peter is discouraged as to any farther attempt at that time, having already taken so much pains to so little purpose: "We have (saith he) toiled all the night, "and have taken nothing." In which reply we note these two things:

1. The great pains he and his company had taken in their honest calling and employment to get a livelihood; "We have toiled all the "night." No calling more lawful, no diligence in an honest employment could be greater; not only to spend the night, when other la-

bourers take their rest, in watching, but in toiling. The * word κοπιωσαντες comes from a verb that signifies *wasting*, *tiring*, *spending*, *labour*. Here was great diligence, even to the wearying and wasting of their spirits: "They toiled, and that all the night."

2. The unsuccessfulness and fruitlessness of their labours, they *caught nothing*. Though their design was honest, and their industry great, yet it succeeded not according to their desire and expectations: it proved but lost labour and pains to no purpose. Hence the note will be,

Doct. *That God sometimes frustrates and blasts the most diligent labours of men, in their just and lawful callings.*

What employment more honest, or laborious, than that of the husbandman, who eats his bread in the sweat of his brow, and sustains all that spending toil and labour, by an expectation of fruit in the season? And yet sometimes it so falls out, that after all his labours and hopes, he reaps nothing but shame and disappointment. Joel i. 11. "Be astonished, O ye husbandmen: Howl, O ye vine-"dressers, for the wheat, and for the barley, because the harvest of "the field is perished."

The employment of the mariner is as lawful as it is beneficial; what he gets, is gotten with imminent hazard of life and liberty, as well as watchings and labours; and yet it so falls out, sometimes, that they labour but for the wind, and spend their strength for very vanity: God cuts off their expectations and lives together. There is a time when they return rich and prosperous, and a time when they either return empty, or return no more. So it was with Tyre, that renowned mart, and famous empory; the flourishing and fall of whose trade you have in Ezek. xxvii. 33, 34. "When thy wares "went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst "enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches, "and of thy merchandise." Here was their prosperity and success; but will this day always last? Shall the sun of their prosperity never set? No; the change was at hand; for in the next verse the scene alters. "In the day when thou shalt be broken by the seas, in the "depths of the waters, thy merchandise, and all thy company in "the midst of thee, shall fall."

Now if we search into the grounds and reasons of these disappointments by the hand of providence, we shall find them reducible to a threefold cause and reason.

1. The sovereign pleasure of God so disposes it.
2. The good of the people of God requires it.
3. The manifold sins of men in their callings provoke it.

First, The sovereign pleasure of God so disposes it. He is the Rector of the universe, and as such will still assert his dominion. It is his pleasure to establish this order in the world, to exalt some, and

* Κοπιω signifies when one lies down wearied at the end of his work.

depress others; to set some above, and others below: all must not be rich and great, but some must be poor and low, and to these ends providences are suited: On some it smiles, on others it frowns: 1 Sam. ii. 7. "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bring-"eth low, and lifteth up." And certainly there is much of Divine wisdom shining forth in this ordination and disposition of persons and their conditions. If providence had alike prospered every man's designs, and set them upon a level, there had been no occasion to exercise the rich man's charity, or the poor man's patience. Nay, without frequent disappointments, providence itself would scarcely be owned in successes, nor these successes be half so sweet to them that receive them, as now they are. The very beauty of providence consists much in these various and contrary effects: So that with respect to the infinite Wisdom which governs the world, it is necessary some should be crossed, and others prosper in their designs.

Secondly, And if we consider the gracious ends and designs of God towards his own people, it appears needful that all of them, in some things, and many of them in most things (relating to their outward condition in this world) should be frustrated in their expectations and contrivances. For if all things here should succeed according to their wish, and a constant tide of prosperity should attend them.

1. How soon would sensuality and earthliness invade their hearts and affections? Much prosperity, like the pouring in of much wine, intoxicates, and overcomes our weak heads and hearts *. Earthly, as well as heavenly objects, have a transforming efficacy in them; there cannot but be much danger in those earthly things that give or promise us much delight. Can a Christian keep his heart as loose from the smiling, as from the frowning world? We little think how deeply it insinuates into our affections in the day of prosperity; but when adversity comes, then we find it.

2. How soon would it estrange them from their God, and interrupt their communion with him? He is certainly a very mortified and heavenly Christian, whose walk with God suffers no interruption by the multitude of earthly affairs, especially when they are prosperous. When Israel was settled in the midst of the riches and delights of Canaan, then say they, (even to their Benefactor, the Author of all their prosperity) "We are lords, we will come no more to thee," Jer. ii. 31. Or, if it do not wholly interrupt their communion, yet secretly destroys and wastes the vigour, life, and sweetness of it. So that Divine Wisdom sees it necessary to cross and disappoint them in the world, to prevent the mischievous influences that prosperity would have upon their duties. He had rather you should miss your desired comforts in these things, than that he should miss that delightful fellowship with you, which he so desires.

3. How loth should we be to leave this world, if constant success and

* *Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque secundis.* In prosperous times, our mind oft wanton grows.

prosperity should follow our affairs and designs here? we see that notwithstanding all the cares, fears, sorrows, crosses, wants, and disappointments we meet with from year to year, and from day to day; yet we are apt to hug the world in our bosoms. As bitter as it is, we court it, admire it, and zealously prosecute it. We cling to it, and are loth to leave it, though we have little rest or comfort in it. What could we do then, if it should answer our expectation and desires? If we grasp with pleasure a thorn that pierces and wounds us; what would we do if it were a rose that had nothing but delight and pleasure in it?

Thirdly, And as disappointments fall out as the effects of sovereign pleasure, and are ordered as preventive means of such mischief, which prosperity would occasion to the people of God; so it comes as a righteous retribution and punishment of the many evils that are committed in our trading and dealings with men. It is a hard thing to have much business pass through our hands, and no iniquity cleave to them and defile them. If God be provoked against us by our iniquities, wonder not that things go cross to our desires and hopes. God may suffer some men to prosper in their wickedness, and others to miscarry in their just and righteous enterprizes; but ordinarily we find that crying sins are remarkably punished, sooner or later, with visible judgments. So that if others do not, yet we ourselves may observe the relation that such a judgment bears to such a sin.

And, from among many, I will here select these following evils, which have destroyed the estates and hopes of many.

(1.) Irreligious and atheistical neglect and contempt of God and his worship, especially in those that have been enlightened, and made profession of religion. This was the sin which brought that blasting judgment upon the estates and labours of the Jews, as the prophet Haggai tells them, chap. i. ver. 2, 4, 6, 9. compared; "They neglected the house of God," i. e. were careless and regardless of his worship, and, in the mean time, were wholly intent upon their own houses and interests, as he tells them in ver. 2, 4. And what was the issue of this? Why, ruin to all their earthly comforts and designs. So he tells them, ver. 6, 9. "Ye have sown much, "and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but "ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none "warm; and he that earneth wages, doth it to put it into a bag with "holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when "ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, saith the Lord of "hosts? Because of mine house that is waste; and ye turn every "man unto his own house." Here are great and manifold disappointments of their hopes, a curse, a blast upon all they took in hand; and the procuring cause of all this was their eager persecution of the world, in a careless disregard of God and his service.

(2.) Injustice and fraud is a blasting sin. A little unjust gain mingled with a great estate, will consume it like a moth. The Spirit

of God hath used a very lively similitude to represent to us the mischievous effects of this sin upon all human diligence and industry. Jer. xvii. 11. "As the partridge sitteth upon eggs, and hatcheth them "not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them "in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

Unjust gain, how long soever men sit brooding upon it, shall after all their sedulity and expectation, turn to no other account than a fowl's sitting upon a nest of addle-eggs uses to do: if she sit till she have pined away herself to death, nothing is produced.

You think you consult the interest of your families herein, but the Lord tells you, "That you consult shame to your houses," Hab. ii. 10. This is not the way to *feather*, but to *fire* your nest. A quiet conscience is infinitely better than a full purse; one dish of wholesome, though coarser food, is better than an hundred delicate, but poisoned dishes. If a man have eaten the best food in the world, and afterwards sips but a little poison, he loseth not only the benefit and comfort of that which was good, but his life or health to boot. It may be, you have gotten much honestly; what pity is it all this good should be destroyed for the sake of a little gotten dishonestly? This is the reason why some men cannot prosper.

(3.) Oppression is a blasting sin to some men's estates and employments. It is a crying sin in the ears of the Lord, and ordinarily intails a visible curse upon men's estates; this, like a moth will suddenly fret and consume the greatest estate. Jam. v. 2, 4. "Your riches "are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten;" i. e. The secret "curse of God wastes and destroys what you get. And what was the cause? He tells us, ver. 4. "Behold the hire of the labourers, "that have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by "fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are en-"tered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The oppression of poor labourers doth more mischief to the oppressors, than it doth to them that are oppressed. It is noted by* one upon this scripture, that it is twice repeated in this text, "Which "have reaped your fields;" and then again, The cry of them which "have reaped:" and the reason is, because it is their life, and so an act of the greatest unmercifulness; and besides, they are disappointed of the solace of their labours. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. "He hath set his "heart upon it;" i. e. he comforts himself in the toils and labours of the day, by reckoning upon his wages at the end of the day.

I wish those that are owners and employers of poor seamen, may seasonably consider this evil: what a woe is denounced upon him "that useth his neighbour's service without wages!" Jer. xxii. 13. Or that by crafty pretences defrauds them of any part thereof, or by tiresome delays wears out their patience, and casts them upon manifold sufferings and inconveniences while they wait for it. God hath

* Manton *in loc.*

not only threatened to be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, but hath strictly forbidden the detaining of their wages. The Jews were commanded to make payment before the sun-set*, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Lev. xix. 30. Be just in all your dealings and contracts, or never expect the righteous God should smile upon your undertakings.

(4.) Falsehood and lying is a blasting sin to our employments; a sin which tends to destroy all converse, and disband all civil societies. And though by falsehood men may get some present advantages, yet hear what the Holy Ghost saith of riches gotten this way: "The "getting of riches by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro "of them that seek death," Prov. xxi. 6. Some trade in lies as much as in wares; yea, they trade off their wares with lies. And this proves a gainful trade (as some men count gain) for the present; but, in reality, it is the most unprofitable trade that any man can drive. For it is but *the tossing of a vanity to and fro:* a phrase importing labour in vain, it profits nothing in the end, and as it profits nothing, so it hurts much: they seek profit intentionally, but death eventually; i. e. it will bring destruction and ruin, not only upon our trades, but our souls. The God of truth will not long prosper the way of lying; one penny gotten by a laborious hand is better than great treasures gotten by a lying tongue: take heed you seek not death in seeking an estate this way. It is a sin destructive to society; for there is no trade where there is no trust, nor no trust where there is no truth; and yet this cursed trade of lying creeps into all trades, as if there were no living (as one speaks) without lying: but sure it is better for you to be *losers* than *liars*. He sells a dear bargain indeed that sells his conscience with his commodity.

(5.) Perjury, or false swearing, is a blasting sin. The man cannot prosper that lies under the guilt thereof. It is said, Mal. iii. 5. "That "God will be a swift witness against the false swearer," i. e. it shall not be long before God by one remarkable stroke of judgment or another witness against so great and horrid an evil. And again, Zech. v. 4. the curse, yea, the roll of curses, "shall enter into "the house of the false swearer, and shall remain in the midst of his "house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones "thereof." This is a sin that hath laid many houses waste, even great and fair, without inhabitant. The ruins of many that were once flourishing, and great men are at this day left to be the lasting monuments of God's righteous judgments, and dreadful warnings to posterity.

And thus I have shewed you what are those common evils in trade, which are the causes of those blasts and disappointments upon it. It now remains that we apply it.

Inference 1. Doth God sometimes disappoint the most diligent

* He does not make good payment who does not pay in due time.

labours of men in their lawful callings? Then this teacheth you patience and submission under your crosses and disappointments; for it is the Lord that orders it to be so. Events are in his hand, and it is a sin of great aggravation to fret and murmur at them when they fall out cross to your desires and hopes. "Behold, is it not of the Lord "of hosts, that the people should labour in the very fire, and the "people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" Hab. ii. 13.

To labour in the very fire, notes intense labour, such as exhausts the very spirits of men whilst they are sweltering and toiling at it; and yet all is to no purpose, they labour but for vanity: and whence is it that such vigorous endeavours are blasted, and miscarry? Is it not of the Lord? And if it be of the Lord, why do we fret and quarrel at his disposals? Indeed, many dare not openly and directly charge God, but seek to cover their discontent at providence, by a groundless quarrel with the instruments, who, it may be, are chargeable with nothing; but that after they have done all they could, in the use of proper means, they did not also secure the event. It is true, the dominion of providence doth not excuse the negligence of instruments; and, in many cases, these may be justly reproved, when providence is duly honoured and submitted to: But when men groundlessly quarrel with instruments, because they are crossed in their expectations, the quarrel is commenced against God himself: and our discontents with men are but a covert for our discontents with God.

Now this is a sore evil, a sin of great and dreadful aggravations. 'To be given over (saith a grave * author) to a contradicting spirit, 'to dispute against any part of the will of God, is one of the greatest 'plagues that a man can be given up to.' "Who art thou that re-"pliest against God?" Rom. ix. 20. It may be thou hast lost an estate, thy friends fail, thy hopes are fallen; God hath blown upon all the projects that thy heart did fancy to itself. Possibly in one day, the designs, labours, and hopes of many years are destroyed: Well, be it so, yet repine not against the Lord. Consider, he is the Sovereign, and only Lord, who may do whatever he pleaseth to do without giving thee any account of his matters. Who can say to him, What dost thou? Beside, if thou be one that God delights in, even these disappointments are to be numbered with thy best mercies. These things are permitted to perish, that thou mayest not perish for ever; and it should trouble thee no more than when thy life is preserved by casting out the wares and goods of the ship. It is better that these perish than that thou shouldst perish; but if thou be one that mingled sin (especially such as were before mentioned) with thy trade, and so hast pulled down misery upon thine own head, by provoking the Lord against thee: With what face canst thou open thy mouth to complain against him? Will you lay a train to blow up

* Mr. Strong, of the will of God, p. 242.

all your success, and then fret against God, when you see the issue? O how unreasonable is this!

But because disappointments fall out so frequently, and it is so hard to bring our hearts to a quiet submission to the will of God under them, I will not dismiss this point until I have offered you some proper and weighty considerations to work your hearts into a calm and meek submission to the will of God; and I shall account it a great mercy if they may prevail.

Consideration 1. And, in the first place, if thou be one that fearest God, consider, that disappointments in earthly things fix no mark of God's hatred upon thee. He may love thee, and yet cross thee, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. "No man knows either love or hatred by all the things that "are before him. All things come alike to all; there is one event "to the righteous, and to the wicked." Yea, we often find success and prosperity following the wicked, whilst the rod of God is upon the tabernacles of the righteous. "These are the ungodly that pros- "per in the world, (saith the Psalmist) whilst in the mean time he "was plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning," Psal. lxxiii. 12, 14. Well then, if you have no other ground than this, you cannot infer the want of love, from the want of success. A man may be prospered in wrath, and crossed in mercy.

Consideration 2. And what though your projects, hopes, and expectations of enlarging your estates fail; yet you may live as happily and comfortably in the condition you are, (if God give you a heart suitable to it) as if you had enjoyed all that success you so fancied and desired.

It is not the increase of an estate, but the blessing of God upon a competency, that makes our condition comfortable to us. As the estate enlarges, so doth the heart. The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the Chaldean prince, Hab. ii. 6. saith, "He keeps not at "home, he enlarges his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot "be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto "him all people." And this is the nature of every man's heart, to enlarge its desire and the greatest enlargements of providence. Still the heart is projecting for some further comfort and content, in some new acquisition; when, indeed a man is as near it in a lower condition as in the highest exaltation.

It is storied of Pyrrhus*, king of Epirus, that having enlarged his dominions by the conquest of Macedonia, he thirsted after Italy; and demanding the advice of Cineas, his great counsellor, he asked the king what he meant to do when he had conquered Italy; Why then, said he) I mean to get Sicily, which is near, rich, and powerful. When you have gotten Sicily, (said Cineas) What then? Afric, said the king, is not far off, and there be many goodly kingdoms, which by my fame, and the valour of my soldiers, I may subdue. Be it so,

* Plutarch in Pyrrho.

said Cineas: When you have Afric, and all in it, what will you do then? Why then, said the king, thou and I will be merry, and make good cheer. Cineas replied, Sir, if this be the end you aim at, what need you venture your kingdom, person, and honour, to purchase what you have already? Surely Epirus and Macedonia are sufficient to make you and me merry: and had you all the world, you could not be more merry than you may now be.

Reader, I advise thee, under all disappointments of thy expectations, to bless God for any comfortable enjoyment thou hast. If God give thee a smaller estate, and a contented heart, it is as well, yea, better than if thou hadst enjoyed thy desire. The bee makes a sweeter meal upon two or three flowers, than the ox that hath so many mountains to graze upon.

Consideration 3. And what if by these disappointments, God be carrying on the great design of his eternal love upon thy soul? This may be the design of these providences; and if so, sure there is no cause for thy despondencies. There is a double aim of these providences; sometimes they are sent to awaken and rouse the dull decayed habits of grace, which under prosperous providences fall asleep by the intermission of acts, and remission of wonted vigour and activity: And should the Lord permit things to run on at this rate, what a deplorable case would this grow to? 'Let a man live (saith * one) 'but two or three years without affliction, and he is almost good for 'nothing; he cannot pray, nor meditate, nor keep his heart fixed 'upon spiritual things: But let God smite him in his health, child, 'or estate; now he can find his tongue and affections again; now 'he awakes and falls to his duty in earnest; now God hath twice 'as much honour from him as he had before. Now, saith God, his 'amendment pleaseth me; this rod was well bestowed: I have dis-'appointed him to his great benefit and advantage. And thus God 'chides himself friends with his people again.'

And sometimes they prove the blessed occasions to work grace. "If "they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then "he sheweth them their works, and their transgression that they "have exceeded: He openeth also their ear to discipline, and com-"mandeth that they return from iniquity," Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10.

And if this be the fruit of it, you will bless God through eternity for these happy disappointments. Then these things perished, that thy soul might not perish.

Consideration 4. Be patient under disappointments; for if you meekly submit, and quietly wait upon God, he can quickly repair all that you have lost, and restore it by other providences double to you. Have you not heard, after all Job's deprivations, and the frustrations of all his earthly hopes, and his admirable patience under all,

* Mr. Steel.

what a gracious end the Lord made with him? And why may not you hope for such a comfortable change of providence towards you, if you also carry it under disappointments as he did? Certainly sad providences are near their change when the heart is calmed in the will of God, and corrected home to him.

Consideration 5. And why should it seem so hard and grievous to you, for God to disappoint your hopes and purposes, when you cannot but know, that you have disappointed his expectations from you so often, and that in greater and better things than these?

He hath looked for fruit (as it is, Isa. v. 4.) for obedience, reformation, and renewed care of duty from you many times; he promised himself, and made account of a good return of his afflictions and mercies, and you promised him as much, and yet have failed his expectation: And is it then strange that you should fail of your hopes, who have failed God so often?

O then see that you are quiet in the will of God; fret not at the defeating of your hopes, wreak not your discontent upon innocent instruments, but look to the just and holy, and good will of God in all things. The wife is sometimes angry with the servant for what he hath done, till he tells her that it was his master's order, and then she is quiet.

Has a ship miscarried, is a voyage lost, a relation dead, an estate gone, a friend carried into captivity, whose return was expected with so much delight and comfort? why, if it be so, it is the Lord hath done it, and be thou silent before him. Your repining will not make it better; sin is no proper cure for affliction. A quiet and submissive spirit is well-pleasing to God, as well as profitable for you.

Inference 2. Doth God sometimes disappoint the expectations of men in their employments? then never set your hearts immoderately upon earthly things, nor raise up to yourselves too great expectations from these things. The stronger your expectations, the heavier God's disappointments will be.

There is a double evil in over-reckoning ourselves, and over-acting our confidence about worldly things: it provokes God to disappoint us, and then makes the disappointment much more grievous when it comes.

It provokes a disappointment especially to the godly. The Lord is jealous of their affections, and will not endure that any thing should be a co-rival, or competitor with him for their hearts: yea, it is so usual with God to dash and remove whatever engrosses too much of the heart, that a gracious soul cannot but reckon that comfort in great danger to be lost, which he finds to be overloved.

If David set his heart upon Absalom, God will not only smite him, but smite David by him, and make him first the instrument of his sorrow, and then the object of it. Jonah did but take a little too much comfort in his gourd, and you know the next news we hear is, that God had prepared a worm to smite it, and cause it to wither away.

And when your inordinate hopes are crossed, as it is very probable they will be, how will your sorrows be aggravated in proportion to them? Those things that seemed to promise us most comfort, are the things that give us most sorrow. Strong affections make strong afflictions. Our sorrows usually rise from what was our hope, and our comforts from that which was the least regarded.

Inference 3. If it be so, then labour to make sure of things eternal, lest you be eternally disappointed there also. O what a sad case is that man in, whose expectations fail from both worlds! If your hopes from this world fail, yet you may bear it comfortably, if you fail not in your better hopes; but if these fail too, you are of all men the most miserable. You know by experience how sad it is to have your hopes cut off in these smaller concerns; to go forth in expectation of a profitable voyage, and to return in a worse case than you went out: it may be you thought to get an estate, but the issue is to lose that little you had. You thought to go to such a place, and there meet with a good market, and possibly yourselves may be carried as slaves, to be sold in the same market. These disappointments are very sad and cutting things, but nothing to an eternal disappointment in your great concern.

For a man to hope he is in Christ, and in a pardoned state, and at last find himself deceived, and that all the sins of his nature, heart, and practice, lie upon him: to hope for admission into heaven, when he is turned out of this world by death, and find the door shut against him; to cry with those poor disappointed wretches, Mat. xxv. 11. "Lord, Lord, open to us;" and receive such an unexpected return from Christ as they did, "Depart from me, I know you not:" Lord, how intolerable is such a defeat of hope as this! O! who can think of it without horror!

The things about which your expectations are frustrated in this world, are small things; you may be happy in the want of them: but the frustration of your hopes from the world to come, is in things of infinite weight. These disappointments are but for a little while! but this will be for ever. O therefore be provoked, even by these things to a diligent and seasonable prevention of a far greater misery.

Since these things cannot be secured, labour to secure those things that may. O that you were but as full of thoughts, cares and fears for heaven as you are for the world! you have spent many thousand thoughts about these things to no purpose. All your thoughts about them are come to nothing; but had they been spent for your souls, to what a comfortable account would they now have turned? Friends, I beseech you make sure for eternity, and let these crosses and losses in the world be the happy occasions to awaken you to an earnest and serious diligence for your everlasting interests. Then you are no losers by your losses: nay, you will have great cause to call them prosperous disappointments, and gainful losses to you.

Inference 4. Then as you would not have the works and labours of your hands blasted, beware of those sins that provoke God to blow upon them. Think not that injustice, oppression, deceit and perjury should ever profit you. God hath cursed all the ways of sin, and you cannot prosper in them. Above all, beware of atheism and irreligion: God will not own them that disown him, and slight his worship. I doubt your profanation of the Lord's day, by drunkenness, idleness, and worldly employments, is not the least cause of those disappointments and losses that have befallen you: the first day of the week, like the first-fruits of the Jews' *harvests*, should sanctify the whole lump.

And let none pretend that multiplicity of business will not allow them time and disposition for sabbath-work. If you be too busy to attend the Lord's service, he can quickly give you a writ of ease, and make you keep more resting days from your labours than you are willing to do. The Lord would not excuse the Israelites, no, not in their busiest seasons, the times of earing and harvest, and the very building of the tabernacle; but all must give way to the sabbath. And I am sure the promise of blessing and success is made to the conscientious observation of it: Isa. lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn "away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure upon my "holy day; and call the sabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord, "Honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, "nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord:" There is a recompence to the soul. "And he shall cause thee to ride on high places "of the earth:" There is a reward to the body. Godliness is profitable to all things.

THE

SEAMAN's RETURN.

SERMON VI.

DEUT. xxxiii. 19.

They shall call the people unto the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand.

THIS scripture is part of the last words of Moses: a man that in his life was a great blessing to Israel: and when he was to be separated from them by death, he pronounces distinct and suitable blessings upon all the tribes. As Christ parted from his disciples,

blessing them, so doth Moses from his people; only with this difference, Moses as God's mouth pronounced, but the great God of heaven and earth alone could confer the blessing. Moses blessed them authoritatively, but could not bless them potestatively, as Christ did. Now these words contain the blessing of the tribe of Zebulun, which was the tribe of seamen. And in them we shall consider these two parts, viz.

1. Their privilege.
2. Their duty.

First, Their privilege, "That they should suck of the abundance "of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand." To suck the abundance of the sea is a * metonymical expression, signifying as much as to be enriched and stored with the wares and merchandise imported by sea to them. Geographers attribute to the sea, arms and bosoms; and the scripture breasts. The sea, like an indulgent mother, embraces those that live upon it in her bosom, and with full flowing breasts nourisheth them, and feeds them as a mother doth the infant that sucks and depends for its livelihood upon her breasts.

And these breasts do not only afford those that hang upon them the necessaries of life, bread, raiment, &c. but the riches, ornaments, and delights of life also. "The treasures hid in the sand," † as gold, coral, ambergrease, and such like precious and rich treasures which it yields. This was the blessing and privilege of the tribe of Zebulun, whose cities and villages were commodiously situated upon the seashore for merchandise and traffic: as you may see Josh. xix. 11.

Secondly, Their duty to which these mercies and privileges obliged them: "They shall call the people to the mountain, there they "shall offer sacrifices of righteousness." By the *mountain*, we are here to understand the *temple*, which Moses, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw to be upon mount Sion, and mount Moriah; which two were as the shoulders that supported it, ver. 12. Here was the worship of God; the sacrifices were here offered up to him. And hither Zebulun, in the sense of God's mercies to them, should call the people, i. e. say some, their own people, their families and neighbours; or as others, the strangers that were among them for traffic; saying, as Isa. ii. 3. "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, to the "mountain of the God of Jacob." And here they shall offer *the sacrifices of righteousness*. By which we are to understand their thank-offerings for the mercies they had received of the Lord. The Jews had not only expiatory sacrifices to procure the pardon of sins committed, but eucharistical sacrifices, or thank-offerings, to testify the sense they had of mercies received. These sacrifices typified moral duties; and when these types were abolished, the apostle shews,

* *Affluentiam maris sugere, est marinis bonis, & mercibus abundare.* Glas.

† *Referunt ad ea quæ emovere solent maria, scil. ad auri fodinas. Effodient e terra arenosa aurum.* Pol. Synop. in loc.

" that the calves of our lips, the sacrifice of praise," are in the stead of them, Heb. xiii. 15.

So then the sum of all this is, that when they returned from sea, or had received the blessings thereof from the hand of God, they should repair to the place of his worship, and there acknowledge and praise the God of their mercies. So that the whole verse thus explained, casts itself into this docrinal observation.

Doct. *That it is the special duty of seamen, when God returns them to their habitations in peace, thankfully to acknowledge and bless his name, for all the preservations and mercies they have received from his hand.*

These are mercies indeed which are obtained from God by prayer, and returned to him again by praise. When we have received our mercies, God expects his praises: After the Psalmist had opened the hazards and fears of seamen upon the stormy ocean, and the goodness of God in bringing them to their desired haven, Psal. cvii. 30. he presently calls upon them for this duty, ver. 31. "O that men would " praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to " the children of men!"

O that men would! why, how is it imaginable they should not? He hath the heart of a beast, not of a man, that would not. Did I say the heart of a beast? Give me that word again. There is a kind of gratitude, even in beasts, to their benefactors. " The ox knoweth " his owner, and the ass his master's crib," Isa. i. 3.

Now the method into which I will cast the discourse, shall be,

First, To open the nature of the duty, and to shew you what it is to praise God for his mercies.

Secondly, To give you the grounds and reasons of the duty, why God expects it, and you ought to give it to him. And then,

Thirdly, To apply it in the several uses it is improveable unto.

1. The nature of the duty needs opening; for few understand what it is. Alas! it is another manner of thing than a customary, formal, cold *God be thanked.* Now, if we search into the nature of this duty, we shall find that whoever undertakes this angelic work, must,

First, Be a heedful observer of the mercies he receives. This is fundamental to the duty. Where no observations of mercies have been made, no praises for them can be returned. God was never honoured by his unobserved mercies. When David had opened the providences of God to the several degrees and orders of men, in its various administrations, and called upon them distinctly to praise God for them; he adds, in the close of all, " Whoso is wise, and will ob- " serve these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness " of the Lord," Psal. cvii. *ult.* It is God's charge against Israel, Hosea ii. 8. " She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, " and oil, and multiplied her silver:" *i. e.* She did not observe and take notice of these mercies, as coming from my hand; but only

looked at the next cause. Thus it is with many, they think not upon their own mercies: others can observe them, but they cannot; they can quickly observe what troubles befal them, but take little notice of their own mercies. Such men can never be thankful.

Secondly, The thankful man must not only *observe* what mercies he hath, and from whom they come; but must particularly consider them in their natures, degrees, seasons, and manner of conveyance; there is much of God's glory, and our comfort lost for want of this. "The "works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have "pleasure therein," Psal. cxi. 2. And indeed, there is no employment in all the world, that yields more pleasure to a gracious soul, than the anatomizing of providence doth. How sweet is it to observe the mutual respects, coincidences, and introductive occasions of our mercies; every minute circumstance hath its weight and value here. He hath little pleasure in his meat, that swallows it whole without chewing.

Thirdly, The thankful person must duly estimate and value his mercies. It is impossible that man can be thankful for mercies he little esteems. Israel could not praise God for that angels food with which he fed them, whilst they despised it in saying, There is nothing but this *manna*.

And surely it shews the great corruption of our nature, that those things which should raise the value of mercies with us, cause us the more to slight them: yet thus it falls out. The commonness, or long-continuance of mercies with us, which should endear them the more, and every day increase our obligation to God, causes them to seem but cheap and small things. And therefore doth God so often threaten them, yea, and remove them, that their worth and excellency may thereby be acknowledged.

Fourthly, The thankful person must faithfully record his mercies, else God cannot have his due praise for them. "Bless the Lord, O "my soul, and forget not all his benefits," Psal. ciii. 2. Forgotten mercies bear no fruit: a bad memory in this case, makes a barren heart and life.

I confess the mercies of God are such a multitude, that a memory of brass cannot retain them. "I will come before thee in the mul-"titude of thy mercies," saith David, Psal. v. 7. They are called "showers of blessings, Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And as impossible it is distinctly to recount all our mercies, as to number the drops of rain that fall in a shower. Nevertheless, it hath been the pious care and endeavour of the people of God, to preserve and perpetuate his mercies, by using all the helps to memory they could. Therefore they have kept registers, Exod. xvii. 14. endited Psalms, *to bring to remembrance*, Ps. lxx. *title;* denominated places from the mercies received there. Thus Jacob called the place where he found so much mercy, Bethel. Hagar named the well, where God unexpectedly relieved

her, Beer-lahai-roi, the well of him that liveth and looketh upon me, Gen. xvi. 13, 14.

They have stamped the mercies upon the days in which they received them. Thus the Jews called those days in which God wrought their deliverance, *Purim*, after the name *Pur*, signifying the lot Haman had cast for their lives; Esther ix. 26. Yea, they have called their mercies upon their children, 1 Sam. i. 20. Thus thankful souls have striven to recognize their mercies, that God might not lose the praise, nor themselves the comfort of them.

Fifthly, The thankful person must be suitably affected with the mercies he receives. It is not a *speculative*, but an *affectionate* remembrance that becomes us: then God hath his glory, when the sense of his mercies melts our hearts into holy joy, love, and admiration. Thus David sits down before the Lord like a man astonished at his goodness to him; 2 Sam. vii. 20. "And what can David say more? "for thou Lord knowest thy servant." The mercies of God have made the saints hearts leap for joy within them: Psal. xcii. 4. "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works; therefore "will I triumph in the works of thy hands." Mercies are not mercies, deliverances are not deliverances to us, if we that receive them are not glad of them.

Sixthly, The thankful person must order his conversation suitably to the engagements that his mercies have put him under. When we have said all, it is the life of the thankful, that is the very life of thankfulness. Obedience and service are the only real manifestations of gratitude. "He that offereth praise glorifieth me: and to "him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation "of God," Psal. l. 23. Set down this for an everlasting truth, That God was never praised and honoured by an abused mercy. God took it ill from Hezekiah, "That he rendered not again ac- "cording to the benefit done unto him," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. He that is truly thankful will say as David, Ps. cxvi. 12. "What shall "I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" We then glorify God with his mercies when we employ them to right ends, when we thankfully take our own share of comfort from them, receiving them with thanksgiving, as from the hand of a father. Mr. Swinnock * tells of a young man, who, lying upon his sick-bed, was always calling for meat; but as soon as it was brought him, he shook and trembled dreadfully at the sight of it, and so continued till it was taken away; and before his death acknowledged God's justice, so that in his health he ordinarily received his meat without thanksgiving.

Use all God's mercies with thankfulness; God will remember them in fury, who forget him in his favours.

And think not what God bestows upon you is wholly for your own use: but honour God with your mercies by clothing the naked and

* Swinnock's Christian Man's Calling, page 409.

feeding the hungry, especially such as are godly. This is a due improvement of your estates; thus you may make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Ah, how little do we consider what praise, what glory we may occasion this way, from others, to the name of God! It is storied of * Dionysius the Syracusian *tyrant*, that when he saw what heaps of gold and silver his son hoarded up in his closet, he asked him what he meant to let it lie there, and not to make friends with it, to get the kingdom after his death? O son (said he) thou hast not a spirit capable of a kingdom. Thus honour the Lord with your substance; look upon all you have as your Master's talents, for which you must give an account: and to use and employ them for God, that you may give up your account with joy; and then you will shew yourselves thankful indeed. Thus you see what is included in real thankfulness. O, it is another matter than we take it to be.

2. Next I promised to give you the grounds and reasons of this duty; why you are obliged after the reception of mercies to such a thankful return of praises. And, among many, I will only single out these three, and briefly open them.

First, God requires and expects it. It is so special and peculiar a part of his glory, as he will never part with it. As great landlords oblige their tenants to a homage and service, when they make over their estates to them, and reserve a quit-rent to themselves, which they value at a high rate; so God, when he bestows deliverances of mercies upon us, still reserves an acknowledgment to himself: and this is dear to him, he will not endure to be defrauded of it; much less that it be given to another. You find this reservation of praise expressly made by him in Psal. l. 15. "Call upon me in the day of "trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Where you have the request, the grant, and the reservation in the grant, q. d. When I have granted thee thy desire, see thou do not defraud me of my glory. There be three things in every mercy, the *matter* of it, the *comfort* of it, and the *glory* of it. The two first God makes over freely to us, he gives the mercies themselves, he allows us to suck out all the lawful pleasure and delight that is in them; but the third he reserves to himself, and will never part with it to any other. If an Hezekiah himself render not to God due acknowledgments, as well as God loves him, there shall be great wrath upon him and Judah for the default, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

Secondly, You are under manifold engagements to render it to the Lord.

(1.) Common ingenuity obliges to a due acknowledgment of favours freely received; and unthankfulness on that score is the odium of mankind. *Ingratum si dicas, omnia dixeris.* You cannot give a

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* *Justin, lib.* 21.

man a more odious character among men, than to say, He is an ungrateful man.

(2.) The examples of the very heathens will condemn you. They praised their gods, which yet were no gods, when they received any deliverance, Judges xvi. 24. Shall idols, dung-hill deities, receive their sacrifices and praises, whilst the true God is forgotten?

Nay, (3.) Many of you have formally and expressly obliged your souls to it, by solemn vows and promises in the day of your distress: and yet will you deal perfidiously with God? Will you not pay the vows which your lips have uttered? Certainly you can never free your souls, from the guilt of perfidiousness against God, whilst you give him not the glory due to his name.

3. *Lastly*, Your ingratitude is the ready way to deprive you of the mercies you have, and to with-hold from you the mercies you might have in your future distresses and wants. He that is ungrateful for mercies received, provokes God to remove them. Thus it fell out with ungrateful Israel, Hosea ii. 5, 8, 9. "She did not know, (i. e. "she did not with consideration and thanks duly acknowledge) "that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil. Therefore will I return, "and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the "season thereof; and will recover my wool and my flax." Thus they suffered their mercies to lapse into the Lord's hand for non-payment of their duties. If you are weary of your mercies, and willing to be rid of them, you cannot take a more effectual course than to forget from whom you had them, and with-hold his praise for them.

And then, for future mercies and deliverances, you have no ground to expect any more from God, whom you have thus requited for former favours. He that gives no thanks for one mercy, hath little ground to expect another. It was a sad word which God spake upon this very provocation, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. when a new distress befel Israel by the Ammonites, and they cried to the Lord for help, he tells them that he had many times delivered them from their enemies: "Yet (saith he) have you forsaken me and served other gods. "Wherefore I will deliver you no more; go and cry to the gods "which ye have chosen, and let them deliver you in the time of "your tribulation." Q. d. With what face can you come to me for new mercies and deliverances, when yourselves know how former mercies have been abused! Think ye that I am weary of my mercies to cast them away upon such unthankful wretches? No, expect no more mercies from me, "I will deliver you no more." One of the fathers calls ingratitude, *Obex infernalis, An hellish stop*, which interrupts the course and current of all God's mercies. Mercy is not only a precious thing, too good to be cast away, but it is a very tender thing, and God deeply resents the abuses of it. Thus you see the grounds and reasons of your duty; it now remains that we apply it.

Use 1. It is your unquestionable duty to return praises upon every receipt of mercies? Then, in the first place, bear your shame and just reproof for your manifest unthankfulness. You dare not deny but you have received many signal and eminent mercies from the hands of God. If you should deny that, I need go no farther to prove you prodigiously ungrateful. But it is too manifest to be denied: you have found God a very present help in trouble: his mercy hath often rescued you out of the jaws of death. Some of you have been in dangers in the deeps; in deaths oft: you have been put to your wit's end; all visible hope and help failed. You might have said with the Psalmist, Psal. cxiii. 4. "I looked upon my right "hand, and there was none; and upon the left, but refuge failed." You have seen your companions intombed before your eyes in the seas, and concluded in your own thoughts your turn was next. You have been in danger by barbarous enemies that have chased you upon the sea to make you a prey: yea, it may be you have been a prey to them, and never thought to have seen the land of your nativity, your houses, wives, and children, any more. You have languished under dangerous diseases, and that remote from friends and necessary accommodations; you have lost your estates, and been reduced to low ebb, and never thought to have seen a day of prosperity any more; yet hath the Lord delivered you out of all your troubles. He hath provided unexpected means of preservation, when the proud waters were ready to go over your souls. And though others went down before your eyes, you were marked out for deliverance, God spake to the raging waves, saying, Touch not this man, I will not deliver him up, though I have done so by others. When cruel enemies chased you, he delivered you, causing the darkness of the night to interpose seasonably betwixt you and them; as the dark side of the cloud shadowed Israel from the Egyptians that pursued them, Exod. xiv. 20. sometimes giving you a favourable gale, which blew mercy and deliverance to you: sometimes by strengthening you to resist their furious attacks, and delivering you from their rage: or if he delivered you into their hands, yet there he preserved you, enabling you to endure their severities, or causing the enemy to treat you well; and finding out a way which you knew not, to bring you at last out of the house of bondage.

He pitied you under your dangerous diseases; and though necessary accommodations and means might be wanting, he was your physician, and healed you; he recovered you immediately without means, or blessed weak and small means to your good. When you were reduced by losses and captivities to a low ebb, so that you might say as the church, Lam. iii. 17. I forgat prosperity; he hath not only recruited thy strength but thy estate also: and when both thy body and estate, like an old leaky ship, have been ready to sink, he hath stopped the leaks in both, careened, repaired, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as sound, and as strong as ever.

And now, reader, suffer me to account and expostulate a little with thy consscience; what hath the fruit of all these mercies been to thee? And how hast thou carried it since those days, towards the God of thy mercies? Hast thou indeed been melted by the sense of all this kindness, into love, thankfulness, and new obedience? Have these favours engaged thee to more strictness in thy duties, and greater watchfulness against sin? Hast thou said, with that good man, Ezra ix. 13, 14. "And now my God, seeing thou hast punished me less "than mine iniquities deserve, and hast given me such deliverances "as these, should I again break thy commandments?" If it be so, surely mercy and goodness shall follow thee all the days of thy life. The Lord then reckons all these mercies well bestowed, and will never repent that he hath done thee good.

But I fear this is not thy case. Sure I am, there are some among you that have quickly forgotten the God that delivered you. Some that have abused him to his face, by ascribing his mercies to good luck, chance, and fortune: not once owning him as your deliverer. And some that have made his mercies weapons of sin, to wound him withal, wasting your estates by prodigality, which were given to refresh your families, and God's poor; yea, abusing them to drunkenness and luxury. And is this the thanks you return him? For which of all my good works (saith Christ to the Jews) do you stone me? So say I, for which of all God's kindnesses to you, do you thus dishonour, and abuse him? O let shame cover your faces this day! Go, reader, fold down this leaf, and get thee to thy knees, and say, I am the man to whom this reproof is sent. I have abused the God of my mercies, I have turned his grace into wantonness. Smite with Ephraim upon thy thigh, and say, *What have I done?* Mourn heartily for thy unkindness to thy best friend, "The God that hath done thee good all "thy life long, and deserves other returns from thee than these."

Use 2. *Lastly*, It calls upon you all to be thankful for your mercies. Chrysostom once wished for a voice like thunder, that all men might hear him. O that I could so call you to this duty, that some of you might effectually hear God's call in this exhortation!

Will you own the hand that delivers you, that feeds, clothes, and heals you? Will you resolve to live the life of praise, and render to the Lord according to the benefits you have received? Will you indeed walk humbly, and thankfully, under all your deliverances, and successes, and glorify God by that wherewith he hath comforted and refreshed you? If there be any saving knowledge of God, and spiritual sense of his love in your souls, methinks I should prevail with you; for do but weigh these following arguments seriously, and they will engage you to it.

Argument 1. How freely have all your mercies streamed to you from the fountain of grace? There was nothing in you to engage it.

The very notion of mercy includes freeness; they are all bestowed upon us, not only as we are *immerentes*, but *male merentes*, undeserving,

but ill-deserving creatures; not only without our merits, but against our merits. And what though there be a concurrence of your abilities, head-work and hand-work in the procurement of some of your mercies, yet still those mercies are the pure effects of free-grace: for all those endeavours of yours had signified nothing to their procurement, without God's blessing; yea, and that wisdom and industry which you have used, were themselves the free gifts of God. You know there are thousands in the world as industrious and wise as you, and such as never provoked God by such sins as you have; who yet are denied the mercies you enjoy. O how should this endear you to God!

Argument 2. How seasonably your mercies have been bestowed upon you in the very point of extremity and danger! God hath on purpose suffered it to grow to an extremity, that thereby he might commend his mercy to you with greater advantage. "In the mount "of the Lerd it hath been seen," Gen. xxii. 14. without this God saw his mercies would have been slighted, and low prized by you: But God hath watched the opportunity of bestowing his goodness upon you, for no other end but to magnify his mercies in your eyes, and make the deeper and more lasting impressions upon your hearts. Shall such mercies, which at first were so amazing and overwhelming to you, at the reception whereof you were like men that dreamed, as the Psalmist speaks, Psalm cxxvi. 1. so soon grow stale and common? God forbid!

Argument 3. How special and distinguishing have some of your mercies been? God hath not dealt with every one as he hath with you. Are not some that went out with you found wanting at your return: They are among the dead, it may be among the damned, and you among the living, yet enjoying the capacity and the means of salvation. God hath prospered your voyage, and returned you with success; you have sucked the abundance of the sea, and the treasures hid in the sand, as the text speaks; but others may say as Naomi, Ruth i. 21. "I went out full, and am come back empty." I went out full of hopes, and am come back with sad disappointments. And is not this a strong tie to thanksgiving?

Argument 4. Did not your mercies find you under great guilt? You know what your own transgressions against the Lord were, and yet such was the strength of mercy, that it brake through all your great provocations, and made its way to you through a multitude of iniquities. It came triumphing over all your great unworthiness; and is not such mercy worthy to be admired, and recorded for ever! O what will affect and melt your hearts, if this will not? Surely such mercies have a constraining power in them, upon all sensible souls.

Argument 5. To conclude; if all the goodness of God which hath passed before your eyes, does indeed prevail upon you to love the Lord, and fear to offend him; if it really constrains you to give up yourselves, and all you have, to be his; then all this is but the be-

ginning of mercies, and you shall see yet greater things than these. God hath more mercies yet behind, and those of a higher kind and more excellent nature than these temporal mercies are. You are now delivered from the dangers of the sea, and have escaped those perils: O but what is this to deliverance from wrath to come? You have been preserved from, or delivered out of Turkish slavery; but what is that to a deliverance from the curse of the law, the bondage of your lusts, and the power of Satan? Happy souls, if these deliverances do in any measure prove introductive to the great salvation.

THE CONCLUSION.

Thus I have, as the Lord hath enabled me, endeavoured to chuse and improve proper subjects for your meditation in every condition that befals you. I cannot carry these truths one degree farther, it is the Lord only that can make them effectual to your souls. But it is my earnest request to you, masters, that have the over-sight, and must give an account for your companies, that you will not only read and consider these things yourselves, but that you will at fit seasons, especially upon the Lord's day, read and inculcate them upon your servants and company; and that, as those who must give an account. Will not this be a better expence of that precious and hallowed time, than to spend it in sleeping in your cabins, or drinking in tipling-houses? All that sin of theirs which you may prevent, and do not, becomes your own sin. And have you not personal sins enough already, but you must draw the guilt of their sins upon you also? I beseech you, and it is my last request, that you will faithfully labour, that you and your companies may serve the Lord.

A

SAINT INDEED:

OR,

THE GREAT WORK OF A CHRISTIAN,

OPENED AND PRESSED.

From Prov. iv. 23.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jesus Christ in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made me an Overseer: Sound Judgment, true Zeal, and unstained Purity, are heartily wished.

My dear Friends,

THERE are three sad sights with which our eyes should continually affect our hearts: The *first*, is to behold in every place so many profane and dissolute ones, who bear the very image of Satan: the face of whose conversation plainly discovers what they are, and whither they are going, Philip. iii. 18, 19. These look like themselves, the children of wrath. The *second* is to see so many cursed hypocrites artificially disguising themselves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of saints, so that even a judicious eye may sometimes mistake the *similar workings* of the Spirit on them, for his *saving workings* on others: To hear such a person conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences; would easily persuade a man to believe that he hath the heart, as well as the face of a sincere Christian: For,

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.

So the people of God do speak, so they pray, and even so they open their conditions: These look like saints, but are none. The *third* is to see so many real saints, in whom the spirit of truth is, who yet, through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, do often fall into such scandalous practices, that they look like hypocrites, though they are not so.

These are three sad sights indeed, and O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I may weep abundantly over them all!

For the *first*, I would mourn heartily, considering that they (so continuing) must be damned eternally, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

For the *second*, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they (so abiding) must be damned doubly, Matth. xxiv. 51.

And for the *third* no less than any of the rest, because, though they themselves may, and shall be saved, yet their examples make fast the bonds of death upon both the former, Matth. xviii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they should shed the blood of others souls, for whom Christ shed his own blood! That ever they should be *cruel* to others who have found Christ so *kind* to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but so it proves occasionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digress a little, and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardened souls, I will presently return to you again. O why do you mischieve your own souls by other men's examples? Because they stumble and break their shins, will you fall and break your necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would soberly consider, and answer these three queries.

Query 1. Doth religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practices of its professors? Or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them? It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it is pure and undefiled, Jam. i. 27. No doctrine so holy, Psal. xix. 8. Nor doth any make more provision for an holy life, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Indeed there is a case wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow from, and necessarily follow their principles: As for example, if I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they set pardons to sale, and so make way for looseness. If I see an Arminian slight the grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his principles, which directly lead to it: But can I do so where such practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed principles, who commit them?

Query 2. Is it not a most irrational thing to let fly at religion because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst, in the mean time, you wholly slight and over-look the holy and heavenly conversation of many others? Are all that profess godliness loose and careless in their lives? No, some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ: And why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? Why the eleven for one Judas?

Query 3. If you condemn religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it, must you not then cast off all religion in the world, and turn down-right atheists? Surely this is the consequent of it: For what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to their profession? And then, as Constantine told the Novatian, you must set up a ladder, and go to heaven by yourself.

But alas! it is not our printed apologies for religion, but the visible reformations of its professors, that must both salve its honour, and re-

move those fatal stumbling-blocks at which the blind world strikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected: *First*, By convincing the consciences of professors of their miscarriages, and the evil aggravations of them. *Secondly*, By medicating the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed. In the *first* of these, a worthy and eminent servant of Christ hath lately laboured, holding a clear gospel-glass before the faces of professors, which truly represents their spots and blemishes: If he that reads it will consider, apply, and practise, it shall doubtless turn to his salvation; but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it, I know it shall turn to a testimony for him that wrote it. The *second* is a principal design of this small treatise, the subject whereof is exceedingly weighty, and of daily use to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses: every one cannot be excellent, who yet may be useful.

See Gospel-glass.

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you,

1. Why I publish it to the view of the world.

2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

First, For the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, That as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity. The providence at first leading me to it, was this, a dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble, upon the account of some special heart-disorder, opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps in that particular; whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance (some of which were dependent upon that consideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this scripture, which I have insisted upon, presented itself, as a fit foundation for the whole discourse; which being lengthened out to what you see, divers friends requested me to transcribe for their use, divers of the cases here handled, and some others begged me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated, to save the pains of subscribing, which to me is a very tedious, and tiresome work: and just as I had almost finished the copy, an opportunity (and that somewhat strangely) offered to make it public. So that from first to last, I have been carried beyond my first intentions in this thing.

Objection. If any say, The world is even cloyed with books, and therefore though the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.

Solution. 1. I answer, There are multitudes of books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about root-truths, and practical godliness, but spend their strength upon impractical notions, and frivolous controversies; many also strike at root-truths, and endea-

vour to undermine the power of godliness; and some there are that nourish the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the gospel, that they may be bread for souls to live and feed on: Now, though I could wish that those who had handled the pen of the scribe, had better employed their time and pains, than to obtrude such useless discourses upon the world; yet for books of the latter rank, I say, that when husbandmen complain of too much corn, let Christians complain of too many such books.

2. And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such books are needless to you; if you let them alone, they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.

Objection. If it be said that several of the cases here handled touch not your condition, I answer,

Solution 1. That which is not your condition may be another's condition. If you be placed in an easy, full and prosperous state, and so have no need of the helps here offered to support your hearts under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every day's provision: If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, some of your brethren are under its feet: If you have inward peace and tranquillity of spirit, and so need not the counsels here given, to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time; yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as David to Abigail, "Blessed be "thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice."

2. That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition at present: say not thy mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: there are changes in the right-hand of the Most High; and then those truths which are little more esteemed than hedge-fruits, will be as apples of gold in pictures of silver. In Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11. the prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own houses) how to defend their religion in Babylon, and what they should say to the Chaldeans there, and therefore that verse is written in Chaldee. So much for the reasons of its publication. Next, for the dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the consideration,

1. Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my gifts as yours, my time as yours, and all the talents I am entrusted with, as yours: it is not with you as with a woman whose husband is dead, and so is freed from the law of her husband, the relation still continues, and so do all the mutual duties of it.

2. By the consideration of my necessitated absence from you, I would not that personal absence should by insensible degrees untwist (as it usually doth) the cord of friendship; and therefore I have endeavoured (as absent friends use to do) to preserve and strengthen it by this small remembrance. It was Vespasian's answer to Apollonius, when he desired access for two philosophers, 'My doors (said Vespa-

'sian, are always open to philosophers, but my very breast is open 'to thee.' I cannot say with him, my doors are open for the free access of friends, being by a sad providence shut against myself; but this I can say, my very breast is still open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.

3. Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these truths for you, which you will have continual need of: And I know few of you have such happy memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate these things, but *litera scripta manet.* I was willing to leave this with you as a legacy, as a testimony of sincere love for, and care over you: this may counsel and direct you when I cannot: I may be rendered useless to you by a civil or natural death; but this will out-live me, and O that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the dust.

To hasten now to a conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these requests.

1. Above all other studies in the world, study your own hearts: waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and sapless controversies. It is reported even of Bellarmine (how truly I examine not)**Quod a studiis scholasticæ theologiæ averteretur fere nauscabundus, quoniam succo carebant liquidæ pietatis*, i. e. he turned with loathing from the study of school-divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety; I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of † Swinkfeldius, "He wanted a regular head, but not an honest heart," than that you should have regular heads, and irregular hearts. My dear flock, I have, according to the grace given me, laboured in the course of my ministry among you, to feed you with the heart-strengthening bread of practical doctrine; and I do assue you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of gospel-truths feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your hearts, than only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or dry syllogistical inference. Leave trifling studies to such as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to employ it: remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do; those hours you spend upon heart-work in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence upon your last hour. Never forget these sermons I preached to you upon that subject, from 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Heart-work is weighty, and difficult work; an error there may cost you your souls: I may say of it as Augustine speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, *Nihilo facilius aut periculosius erratur;* A man can err in nothing more easily or more dangerously. O then study your hearts.

* *Fuligattus in vita Bellarm.*

† *Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit.*

2. My next request is, That you will carefully look to your conversations, and be accurate in all your ways, hold forth the word of life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle yourselves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day to judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. O then, what manner of persons ought you to be! you have many eyes over you; the omniscient eye of God that searches heart and reins, Rev. ii. 23. the vigilant eye of Satan, Job i. 7, 8. the envious eyes of enemies, that curiously observe you, Psal. v. 8. the quick and observant eye of conscience, which none of your actions escape, Rom. ix. 1.

O then be precise and accurate in all manner of conversation; keep up the power of godliness in your closets and families, and then you will not let it fall in your more public employments and converses in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the gospel, that it makes the best parents and children, the best masters and servants, the best husbands and wives in the world.

My third and last request is, that you may pray for me: I hope I can say, and I am sure some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your prayers: and indeed so it should be, see Luke x. 2. I am persuaded also, I have been carried on in my work by your prayers; it is sweet when it is so; see Eph. vi. 18, 19. And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a farther benefit, even that which is mentioned, Heb. xiii. 18, 19. Philem. ver. 22. And truly it is but equal you should pray for me, I have often prayed for you: let the pulpit, family, and closet witness for me; and God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

Yea, friends, your own interest may persuade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage; if God preserve me, it is for your use and service: the more gifts and graces a minister hath, the better for them that shall wait on his ministry; the more God gives in to me, the more I shall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this small testification of my great love, and have recourse to it, according as the exigencies of your condition shall require: read it consideringly, and obediently; judge it not by the dress and style, but by the weight and savour of what you read. It is a good rule of Bernard, *In legendis libris, non quæramus scientiam sed saporem*, i. e. In reading books, regard not so much the science as the savour. That it may prove the savour of life unto life to you, and all those in whose hands it shall come, is the hearty desire of

Your loving and faithful Pastor,

JOHN FLAVEL.

From my study at Ley, in Slapton, *Oct.* 7, 1667.

A

SAINT INDEED, &c.

Prov. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

THE heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and the best afterwards: it is the seat of principles, and the fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and stress of religion; here is that which makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate to heaven a strait gate. Direction and help in this great work are the scope and sum of this text: wherein we have,

1. An exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."

2. The reason, or motive enforcing it, "For out of it are the issues "of life."

In the exhortation I shall consider,

1. The matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it.

1. The mattter of the duty, *keep thy heart.* Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philosophers call the *primum vivens, et ultimum moriens;* the first that lives, and the last that dies; but by heart, in a metaphor, the scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of thy soul: in Rom. i. 21. it is put for the understanding part, their foolish heart, i. e. "their foolish understanding was darkened." And Psalm cxix. 11. it is put for the memory, "Thy word have I hid in my heart;" and 1 John iii. 10. it is put for the conscience, which hath in it both the light of the understanding and the recognitions of the memory: if our heart condemn us, i. e. if your consciences, whose proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole soul, or inner man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the soul is to the man; and what health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul: *Quod sanitas in corpore, id sanctitas in corde.* The state of the whole body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the heart, and the everlasting state of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the soul.

And by keeping the heart, understand the *diligent* and *constant* use and improvement of all holy means and duties, to preserve the soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God.

* Livater, on the place, will have the word taken from a besieged garrison, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within, in which danger the soldiers, upon pain of death, are commanded to watch; and whereas the expression *(keep thine heart)* seems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not imply a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to stop the sun in its course, or make the rivers run backward, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: we may as well be our own *saviours*, as our own *keepers;* and yet Solomon speaks properly enough, when he saith *keep thy heart;* because the duty is our's though the power be God's. A natural man hath no power, a gracious man hath some, though not sufficient; and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and assisting strength of Christ; *Gratia gratiam postulat*, grace within us is beholden to grace without us, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." So much of the matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it is, *with all diligence;* the Hebrew is very emphatical, † *Cum omni custodia*, keeping with all keeping, *q. d.* keep, keep; set double guards, your hearts will be gone else. And this vehemency of expression, with which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep your hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The reason, or motive quickening to this duty, is very forcible and weighty: "For out of it are the issues of life." That is, it is the source and fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc fons boni et peccandi origo*, saith Jerom; it is the spring and original both of good and evil, as the spring in a watch that sets all the wheels in motion. The heart is the treasury, the hand and tongue but the shops; what is in these comes from thence; the hand and tongue always begin where the heart ends. The heart contrives, and the members execute; Luke vi. 45. "A good man out of the "good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil "man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things; "for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh." So then, if the heart err in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; for heart-errors are like the errors of the first concoction, which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the misplacing, and inverting of the stamps and letters in the press, which must needs cause so many errata in all the copies that are printed off. O then, how important a duty is that which is contained in the following proposition?

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* I say constant, for the reason added in the text extends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christian's life, and makes it bind *ad semper:* If the heart must be kept because out of it are the issues of life; then as long as the issues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

† מכל משמר

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great business of a Christian's life.*

What the philosopher saith of waters, is as properly applicable to hearts; *Suis terminis difficile continentur*, it is hard to keep them within bounds: God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress, not only the bounds of grace and religion, but even of reason and common honesty? *Hic labor, hoc opus est;* this is that which affords the Christian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying-day. It is not the cleansing of the hand that makes the Christian, for many a hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he; but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes so many sad complaints, and costs so many deep groans and brinish tears. It was the pride of Hezekiah's heart that made him lie in the dust mourning before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. It was the fear of hypocrisy invading the heart, that made David cry, "Let my heart be found in thy statutes that I "be not ashamed," Psalm cxix. 80. It was the sad experience he had of the divisions and distractions of his own heart, in the service of God, that made him pour out that prayer, Psalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name."

The method in which I shall improve the point, shall be this,

First, I shall enquire what the keeping of the heart supposes and imports.

Seoondly, Assign divers reasons, why Christians must make this the great work and business of their lives.

Thirdly, Point at those special seasons which especially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, Apply the whole in several uses.

1. What the keeping of the heart supposes and imports.

To keep the heart, necessarily supposes a previous work of sanctification, which hath set the heart right, by giving it a new spiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the heart is not *set right* by grace, as to its habitual frame, no duties or means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the poise of the unsanctified heart, which biasses and moves it in all its designs and actions; and as long as it is so, it is impossible that any external means should keep it with God.

Man, by creation, was of one constant, uniform frame and tenour of spirit, held one straight and even course; not one thought or faculty revelled or disordered; his mind had a perfect illumination to understand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his sensitive appetite, and other inferior powers, stood in a most obedient subordination.

Man, by degeneration, is become a most disordered and rebellious creature, contesting with, and opposing his Maker, as the *first cause*, by self-dependence; as the *chiefest good*, by self-love; as the *highest Lord*, by self-will, and as the *last end*, by self-seeking; and so is quite

disordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated understanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will full of rebellion and stubbornness; his subordinate powers, casting off the dominion and government of the superior faculties.

But by regeneration this disordered soul is set aright again: sanctification being the rectifying and due framing, or as the scripture phrases it, the renovation of the soul after the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. in which *self-dependence* is removed by faith; *self-love* by the love of God; *self-will* by subjection and obedience to the will of God; and *self-seeking* by self-denial. The darkened understanding is again illuminated, Eph. i. 18. the refractory will sweetly subdued, Psalm cx. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiscence gradually conquered, Rom. v. 7. *per tot.* And thus the soul which sin had universally depraved is again by grace restored and rectified.

This being pre-supposed, it will not be difficult to apprehend what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing else but the *constant care and diligence of such a renewed man, to preserve his soul in that holy frame to which grace hath reduced it, and daily strives to hold it.*

For though grace hath, in a great measure, rectified the soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper: yet sin often actually discomposes it again: so that even a gracious heart is like a musical instrument, which, though be it never so exactly tuned, a small matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aside but a little, and it will need setting again before you can play another lesson on it; even so stands the case with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead, and disordered when they come to another? And therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, Job xi. 13. "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands "towards him." Well then, to keep the heart is carefully to preserve it from sin, which disorders it; and maintain that spiritual and gracious frame, which fits it for a life of communion with God. And this includes these six acts in it:

1. Frequent observation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal persons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts; there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have scarce had one hour's discourse with their own hearts all that while: It is a hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon such an account; but saints know those soliloquies and self-conferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The heathen could say, *anima sedendo et quiescendo fit sapiens*, the soul is made wise by sitting still in quietness: though bankrupts wish not to look into their books of accompt, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, Psal. lxxvii. 6. "I commune with mine own heart." The heart can never be kept until its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep humiliation for heart-evils and disorders; thus

Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. Thus the people were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in prayer, in a sense of the plague of their own hearts, 1 Kings viii. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart hath been laid low before God: O what an heart have I? They have in their confessions pointed at the heart, the pained place; Lord, here is the wound, here is the plague-sore. It is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it, if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest supplications and instant prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying grace, when sin hath defiled and disordered it; so Psalm xix. 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults;" and Psalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Saints have always many such petitions depending before the throne of God's grace; this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God: When they are praying for outward mercies, haply their spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the heart-case, then they extend their spirits to the utmost, fill their mouths with arguments, weep and make supplication: Oh, for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more. To hate sin more, to walk more evenly with God: Lord, deny not to me such a heart, whatever thou deny me; give me an heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. It is observed of holy Mr. Bradford, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing until he had felt some brokenness of heart for that sin; and when praying for any spiritual mercy, would never give over that suit, until he had got some relish of that mercy. That is the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong engagements and bonds upon ourselves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the heart may be induced to sin: Well-composed, advised, and deliberate vows, are, in some cases, of excellent use to guard the heart against some special sin; so Job xxxi. 1. "I made a covenant "with mine eyes;" by this means, holy ones have over-awed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a constant holy jealousy over our own hearts; quicksighted self-jealousy is an excellent preservative from sin; he that will keep his heart must have the eyes of his soul awake and open upon all the disorderly and tumultuous stirrings of his affections; if the affections break loose, and the passions be stirred, the soul must discover and suppress them before they get to an height: O my soul, dost thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and passions, where is your commission?

State viri, quæ causa viæ? quive estis in armis. Vir.

Happy is the man that thus feareth always, Prov. xxviii. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, shake off security, and preserve themselves from iniquity; he that will keep his heart, must feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and pass the whole time of his sojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from sin.

6. And, lastly, To add no more, it includes the realizing of God's presence with us, and setting the Lord always before us: This the people of God have found a singular mean to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from sin; when the eye of our faith is fixed upon the eye of God's omniscience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy Job durst not suffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought; and what was it that moved him to so great a circumspection? Why, he tells you, Job xxxi. 4. "Doth he "not see my ways, and count all my steps? Walk before me (saith "God to Abraham) and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1. Even as parents use to set their children in the congregation before them, knowing that else they will be toying and playing; so would the heart of the best man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In these and such like particulars, do gracious souls express the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking loose of their corruptions in times of temptation, as seamen are to bind fast the guns, that they break not loose in a storm; as careful to preserve the sweetness and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great sweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill air. This is the work, and of all works in religion it is the most difficult, constant, and important work.

1. It is the hardest work; heart-work is hard work indeed. To shuffle over religious duties with a loose and heedless spirit, will cost no great pains; but to set thyself before the Lord, and tie up thy loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him: this will cost thee something: To attain a facility and dexterity of language in prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions, is easy; but to get thy heart broken for sin whilst thou art confessing it; melted with free grace whilst thou art blessing God for it; to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of God's infinite holiness, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after duty, will surely cost thee some groans and travailing pain of soul: To repress the outward acts of sin, and compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter; even carnal persons by the force of common principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up an holy government over thy thoughts, to have all things lie straight and orderly in the heart, this is not easy.

2. It is a constant work. The keeping of the heart is such a work

as is never done till life be done: this labour and our life end together: It is with a Christian in this business, as it is with seamen that have sprung a leak at sea, if they tug not constantly at the pump, the water increases upon them, and will quickly sink them. It is in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary; there is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moses' hand, whilst Israel and Amalek were fighting below, Exod. xvii. 12. No sooner do Moses' hands grow heavy and sink down, but Amalek prevails. You know it cost David and Peter many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. It is the most important business of a Christian's life. Without this we are but formalists in religion; all our professions, gifts, and duties signify nothing: "My son, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 36. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever else you bring to him: There is so much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it. Concerning the heart, God seems to say, as Joseph of Benjamin, "If you bring not Benjamin "with you, you shall not see my face." Among the heathens, when the beast was cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the *pricst* looked upon was the heart, and if that was unsound and naught, the sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious soever in other respects) offered him without a heart. He that performs duty without a heart, viz. heedlessly, is no more accepted with God than he that performs it with a double heart, viz. hypocritically, Isa. lxvi. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the duty, what is imported in this phrase, "Keep thy heart."

2. Next I shall give you some rational account why Christians should make this the great business of their lives to keep their hearts.

The importance and necessity of making this our great and main business, will manifestly appear in that, 1. The honour of God; 2. The sincerity of our profession; 3. The beauty of our conversation; 4. The comfort of our souls; 5. The improvement of our graces; and, 6. Our stability in the hour of temptation; all are wrapt up in, and dependent on our sincerity and care in the management of this work.

1. The glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The schools do well observe, that outward sins are *majoris infamæ*, sins of great infamy; but heart-sins are *majoris reatus*, sins of deeper guilt. How severely hath the great God declared his wrath from heaven against heart-wickedness; the great crime for which the old world stands indicted, Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedness, "God saw that every imagination (or fic-"tion) of their heart was only evil, and that continually;" for which

he sent the dreadfullest judgment that was ever executed since the world began: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have "created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the "creeping things and the fowls of heaven, for it repenteth me that "I have made man," ver. 7. We find not their murders, adulteries, blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alleged against them; but the evils of their hearts: Yea, that which God was so provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemy's hand, was the evil of their hearts, Jer. iv. 14. "O Je-"rusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be "saved; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" The wickedness and vanity of their thoughts God took special notice of; and because of this the Chaldean must come upon them as a *lion from his thicket*, ver. 7. *and tear them to pieces.* For the very sin of thoughts it was that God threw down the fallen angels from heaven, and keeps them still in everlasting chains to the judgment of the great day; by which expression is not obscurely intimated some extraordinary judgment to which they are reserved, as prisoners that have most irons laid upon them, may be supposed to be the greatest malefactors: and what was their sin? Why, only spiritual wickedness! For they, having no bodily organs, could act nothing externally against God. Yea, mere heart-evils are so provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that some men perform unto him, Isa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he "that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offer-"eth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth "incense, as if he blessed an idol." In what words could the abhorrence of a creature's actions be more fully expressed by the holy God? Murder and idolatry are not more vile in his account, than their sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed: And what made them so? The following words inform us, "their soul "delighteth in their abominations."

To conclude, such is the vileness of mere heart-sins, that the scriptures sometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the case of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God; the apostle bids him "repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be "forgiven him." O then, never slight heart-evils; for by these God is highly wronged and provoked; and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our profession much depends upon the care and conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it is most certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart: You have a pregnant instance of this in the case of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 31. "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the "Lord God of Israel with his heart." That context gives us an ac-

count of the great service performed by Jehu against the house of Ahab and Baal, as also of a great temporal reward given him by God for that service, even that his children to the fourth generation, should sit upon the throne of Israel. And yet, in these words, Jehu is censured for an hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the person that did it as hypocritical: And wherein lay his hypocrisy? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, i. e. he did all insincerely, and for self-ends; and though the work he did was materially good, yet he, not purging his heart from those unworthy self-designs in doing it, was an hypocrite: And Simon, of whom we spake before, though he appeared such a person, that the apostle could not regularly refuse him; yet his hypocrisy was quickly discovered: And what discovered it but this, that though he professed and associated himself with the saints, yet he was a stranger to the mortification of heart sins? "Thy heart is not right "with God," Acts viii. 21. It is true there is a great difference among Christians themselves, in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; some are more conversant and successful in it than others are; but he that takes no heed to his heart, that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a hypocrite, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and sit "before thee (as my people) and they hear thy words, but they "will not do them; for with their mouths they shew much love, but "their heart goeth after their covetousness." Here were a company of formal hypocrites, as is evident by that expression *(as my people)* like them but not of them. And what made them so? Their outside was fair; here were reverend postures, high professions, much seeming joy and delight in ordinances, "Thou art to them as a "lovely song:" yea, but for all that they kept not their hearts with God in those duties, their hearts were commanded by their lusts, they went after their covetousness: had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well; but not regarding which way their hearts went in duty, there lay the score of their hypocrisy.

Objection. If any upright soul should hence infer, that I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty; do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Solution. To this I answer, The very objection carries in it its own solution. Thou sayest, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst, thou hast the blessing of an upright, though God sees good to exercise thee under the affliction of a discomposed heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning hypocrisy.

(1.) This fore-care is seen partly in laying up the word in thine

heart to prevent them, Psal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in "mine heart, that I might not sin against thee:" partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, Jer. xxx. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our onsets upon duty, Psal. cxix. 36, 37. it is a good sign where this care goes before a duty.

And, (2.) It is a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise, Psal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts," Gal. v. 17. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh."

And, (3.) Thy after-grief discovers thy upright heart. If, with Hezekiah, thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou hast no reason, from those disorders, to question the integrity of it; but to suffer sin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a sad and dangerous symptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our conversation arises from the heavenly frame and holy order of our spirits; there is a spiritual lustre and beauty in the conversation of saints: "The righteous is more excellent than "his neighbour," they shine as the lights of the world; but whatever lustre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their spirits; as the candle within puts a lustre upon the lanthorn in which it shines. It is impossible that a disordered and neglected heart should ever produce well-ordered conversation; and since (as the text observes) the issues or streams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it must needs follow, that such as the heart is, the life will be: hence 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. "Abstain from fleshly lusts,— "having your conversation honest," * or *beautiful*, as the Greek word imports. So Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, "and the unrighteous man his thoughts." His way notes the course of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore since the way and course of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forsaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, these actions are virtually and seminally contained in our thoughts, these thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made up into suitable actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then, as Christ saith, Mat. xv. 19. "Out of the heart "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," &c. Mark the order; first, wanton, or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or murderous practices.

And if the heart be holy and spiritual, then, as David speaks, from sweet experience, Psal. xlv. 1. "My heart is (inditing) a good "matter, I speak of things which (I have made), my tongue is as "the pen of a ready writer." Here is a life richly beautified with good works, some ready made; "I will speak of the things which "I have made;" others upon the wheel making, my heart is inditing, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

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* Καλην.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to discern, by the duties and converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under; take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious, heavenly, and profitable, will his converses and duties be! what a lovely companion is he during the continuance of it! It would do any one's heart good to be with him at such a time, Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31. "The mouth of "the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judg- "ment, the law of his God is in his heart."

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterously and ingeniously will he wind in spiritual discourse, improving every occasion and advantage to some heavenly purpose? Few words run then at the waste spout.

And what else can be the reason why the discourses and duties of many Christians, are become so frothy and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another, becomes as a dry stalk, but because their hearts are neglected? Surely this must be the reason of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed; for want of this Christian-fellowship, it is become a sapless thing; so the attracting beauty that was wont to shine from the conversations of the saints upon the faces and consciences of the world, (which, if it did not allure, and bring them in love with the ways of God, yet at the least left a testimony in their consciences of the excellency of those men and their ways) this is in a great measure lost, to the unspeakable detriment of religion.

Time was, when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the world stood at a gaze at them, as the word ξενιζονται, 1 Pet. iv. 4. imports. Their life and language were of a different strain from others, their tongues discovered them to be Galileans, wherever they came; but now, since vain speculations and fruitless controversies have so much obtained, and heart-work, practical godliness, so much neglected among professors, the case is sadly altered; their discourse is become like other men's: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, Acts ii. 6.) "hear every man speak in his "own language." And truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of religion again repaired, till Christians fall to their old work; till they ply heart-work closer; when the salt of heavenly-mindedness is cast into the spring, the streams will run clearer, and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts; for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the Antinomian doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately assures you, by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of

your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit, to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance, in the ordinary way wherein God dispenses it, you must take pains with your own hearts; you may expect your comforts upon easier terms, but I am mistaken if ever you enjoy them upon any other; "Give all "diligence, prove yourselves;" this is the scripture way. I remember Mr. Roberts, in his Treatise of the covenant, tells us, that he knew a Christian, who in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the infallible assurance of God's love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voice from heaven, yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voice from the trees and stones there; this, after many desires and longings, was denied him; but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the word, and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the learned Gerson gives us of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation; at last being sweetly settled, and assured, one asked him how he attained it? He answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit, indeed, assures by witnessing our adoption; and he witnesseth two ways.

(1.) Objectively, i. e. by working those graces in our souls which are the conditions of the promise, and so the Spirit and his graces in us, are all one: the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these, is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned, without serious searching, and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine.

(2.) The other way of the Spirit's witnessing is effectively, i. e. by irradiating the soul with a grace-discovering light, shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work; he first infuses the grace, and then opens the eye of the soul to see it. Now since the heart is the subject of that infused grace, even this way of the Spirit's witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: For,

(1.) A neglected heart is so confused and dark, that the little grace which is in it, is not ordinarily discernible: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it very difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: how then shall the Christian who is (comparatively) negligent and remiss about heart-work, be ever able to discover it? Sincerity, which is the *quæsitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the heart like a small piece of gold in the bottom of a river, he that will find it, must stay till the water is

clear, and settled, and then he shall see it sparkling at the bottom. And that the heart may be clear, and settled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence, will it cost?

(2.) God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent souls with the comforts of assurance; he will not so much as seem to patronize sloth and carelessness; he will give it, but it shall be in his own way: his command hath united our care and comfort together; they are mistaken that think the beautiful child of assurance may be born without pangs: ah, how many solitary hours have the people of God spent in heart-examination! how many times have they looked into the word, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they discovered sincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant conclusion of assurance; then comes a doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reasonings, they have had in their own breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable settlement.

To conclude, suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain assurance, yet it is impossible he should long retain it: For, as for those whose hearts are filled with the joys of assurance, if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever they long enjoy it: for a little pride, vanity, carelessness, will dash to pieces all that for which they have been labouring a long time, in many a weary duty. Since, then, the joy of our life, the comfort of our souls, rises and falls with our diligence in this work, keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our graces depends upon the keeping our hearts; I never knew grace thrive in a negligent and careless soul: the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing grace is. In Eph. iii. 17. we read of "being rooted in grace;" grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, Psal. cxvi. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is true, Christ is the root of a Christian; but Christ is *origo originans*, the originating root; and grace *origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Christ; according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful, or vigorous. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its strength; the heart is, as it were the pasture, in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, Psal. cxxxix. 17. "How precious are thy thoughts to me, "O God! how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, "they are more in number than the sand; and when I awake, I am "still with thee." And as the gracious heart feeds and nourishes them, so they refresh and feast the heart, Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. "My

"soul is filled as with marrow and fatness whilst I think upon thee," &c. But in the disregarded heart, swarms of vain and foolish thoughts are perpetually working, and justle out those spiritual ideas, and thoughts of God, by which the soul should be refreshed.

Besides, the careless heart makes nothing out of any duty or ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet these are the conduits of heaven, from whence grace is watered and made fruitful: a man may go with an heedless spirit from ordinance to ordinance, abide all his days under the choicest teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for heart-neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich soever, abide in that soul, Mat. xiii. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common, like the high-way, free for all passengers; when the seed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unless we take heed how we hear; a man may pray, and never be the better, unless he watch unto prayer. In a word, all ordinances, means, and duties, are blessed unto the improvement of grace, according to the care and strictness we use in keeping our hearts in them.

6. *Lastly*, The stability of our souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according to the care and conscience we have of keeping our hearts; the careless heart is an easy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main batteries are raised against that fort-royal, the heart; if he wins that, he wins all; for it commands the whole man: and, alas! how easy a conquest is a neglected heart? It is no more difficult to surprize it, than for an enemy to enter that city whose gates are open and unguarded: it is the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it comes to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength.

There is, (1.) Ορεξις, The irritation of the object, or that power it hath to work upon, and provoke our corrupt nature; which is either done by the real presence of the object, or else by speculation, when the object (though absent) is held out by the phantasy before the soul.

(2.) Then follows Ορμη, the motion of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it.

(3.) Then there is Βουλησις, a consultation in the mind about it, deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it.

(4.) Next follows Αιρεσις, the election, or choice of the will.

(5.) And lastly Βουλημα, The desire, or full engagement of the will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entered victoriously, and displayed his colours upon the walls of that royal fort; but had the heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this height: the temptation had been stopped in the first or second act. And indeed there

it is stopped easily: for it is the motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of a hill; it is easily stopped at first, but when it is set agoing, *Vires acquirit eundo:* And therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop sin there. The motions of sin are weakest at first, a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the Syrians were brought blindfold into the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were.

By this time, reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of the heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the soul in it.

3. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as we observed before) the duty binds *ad semper*, and there is no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first,

1. *Season.* 'Is the time of prosperity, when providence smiles 'upon us, and dandles us upon its knee. Now, Christian, keep thy 'heart with all diligence; for now it will be exceeding apt to grow 'secure, proud, and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata*, '(saith Bernard) to see a man humble under prosperity, is one of the 'greatest rarities in the world. Even a good Hezekiah could not 'hide a vain-glorious temper under his temptation, and hence that 'caution to Israel, Deut. vi. 10, 11, 12. "And it shall be when the 'Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he 'sware to thy fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give thee 'great and goodly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of 'all good things which thou filledst not, &c. Then beware lest thou 'forget the Lord:" and indeed so it fell out, "for Jeshurun waxed 'fat, and kicked," Deut. xxxii. 15.'

Now then, the first case will be this, viz.

Case 1. *How a Christian may keep his heart from pride and carnal security, under the smiles of providence, and constancy of creature-comforts.*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity; the first is this,

1. *To consider the dangerous ensnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition; few, yea, very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition*, Mat. xix. 24. "It is easier (saith Christ) for a camel to pass through "the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of "heaven;" and 1 Cor. i. 26. "Not many mighty, not many noble are

" called." It might justly make us tremble when the scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved; much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are speaking, but few shall be saved. When Joshua called all the tribes of Israel to lot upon them for the discovery of Achan, doubtless Achan feared; when the tribe of Judah was taken, his fear increased; but when the family of the Zarhites was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the scripture comes so near as to tell us that of such a sort of men very few shall escape, it is time to look about; *Miror si potest servari aliquis rectorum*, saith Chrysostom; I should wonder if any of the *rulers* be saved. O how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleasures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction! how few, like the daughter of Tyre, come to Christ with a gift! how few among the rich intreat his favour!

2. *It may keep us yet more humble and watchful in prosperity, if we consider that among Christians many have been much the worse for it.* How good had it been for some of them, if they had never known prosperity! When they were in a low condition, how humble, spiritual, and heavenly, were they! but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their spirits? It was so with Israel, when they were in a low condition in the wilderness; then Israel was *holiness to the Lord*, Jer. ii. 23. but when they came into Canaan, and were fed in a fat pasture, then, " we are lords, we will come no " more unto thee," ver. 31. Outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses; as in a low condition their civil employments were wont to have a tang and savour of their duties, so in an exalted condition their duties commonly have a tang of the world. He indeed is rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by his riches; there are but few Jehoshaphats in the world, of whom it is said, 2 Chron xvii. 5, 6. "He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart " was lifted up in the way of God's commands:" Will not this keep thy heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have lost that which all the world cannot purchase? Then, in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this consideration, *that God values no man a jot the more for these things.* God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward graces: they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in God's eyes, 1Pet. iii. 4. He despises all worldly glory, and accepts no man's person; " but in " every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is " accepted of him," Acts x. 35. Indeed, if the judgment of God went by the same rule that man's doth, we might value ourselves by these things, and stand upon them: But as one said (when dying) I shall not appear before God as a doctor, but as a man; *tantus quisque est, quantus est apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as

he is in the judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet swell? And will neither of the former considerations keep it humble?

4. Then, *fourthly*, Consider, *how bitterly many persons have bewailed their folly when they came to die, that ever they set their hearts upon these things, and heartily wished that they had never known them.* What a sad story was that of Pius Quintus, who dying cried out despairingly, when I was in a low condition, I had some hopes of salvation; but when I was advanced to be cardinal, I greatly doubted it; but since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. Spencer also tells us a real, but sad story, of a rich oppressor, who had scraped up a great estate for his only son; when he came to die, he called his son to him, and said, son; do you indeed love me? The son answered, that nature, besides his paternal indulgence, obliged him to that. Then said the father, express it by this; hold thy finger in the candle as long as I am saying a *pater noster:* The son attempted, but could not endure it. Upon that the father broke out into these expressions, thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my soul for thee, and must burn body and soul in hell for thy sake: Thy pain would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The heart may be kept humble, by considering *of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a soul heartily engaged in the way to heaven;* they shut out much of heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of heaven at last. If thou consider thyself under the notion of a stranger in this world, travelling for heaven, and seeking a better country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken, and delighted with these things, as a weary horse hath with a heavy clog-bag: There was a serious truth in that atheistical scoff of Julian when he took away the Christians' estates, and told them it was to make them fitter for the kingdom of heaven.

6. Is thy spirit, for all this, flatulent and lofty? Then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein, according to our receipts of mercies, shall be our accompts for them:* And methinks this should awe and humble the vainest heart that ever was in the breast of a saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life. Mic. vi. 5. "Remember, O my people, from Shittim "unto Gilgal," &c. yea, they are exactly numbered, and recorded in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable. Luke xii. 48. "To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." You are but stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make, who have much of this world in your hand? What swift witnesses will your mercies be against you, if this be the best fruits of them?

7. It is a very humbling consideration, *that the mercies of God should work otherwise upon my spirit, than they use to do upon the spirits of others to whom they come as sanctified mercies from the love*

of God. Ah Lord what a sad consideration is this! enough to lay me in the dust; when I consider,

(1.) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God has raised them, the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did Jacob, when God had given him much substance. Gen. xxii. 10. "And Jacob said, I am not worthy of the least of all "thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto "thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now "I am become two bands." And thus it was with holy David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. When God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him a house, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, "Who am I? and what is my father's "house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And so indeed God required, Deut. xxvi. 5. when Israel was to bring to God the first-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, "A Syrian ready to perish was "my father," &c. Do others raise God the higher for the raising them? And the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him, and exalt myself? O what a sad thing is this!

(2.) Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their mercies: So David, 2 Sam. vii. 26. "Let thy name be magnified, and the "house of thy servant be established." He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So Psalm xviii. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, "The Lord (saith he) is my strength, and my rock, he is "become my salvation." They did not put the crown upon their own heads, as I do.

(3.) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their souls in love to the God of their mercies. So Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1. when she received the mercy of a son, "My soul (saith "she) rejoiceth in the Lord;" not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy. And so Mary, Luke i. 46. "My soul doth magnify the "Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." The word signifies to make more room for God; their hearts were not contracted, but the more enlarged to God.

(4.) The mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So Ezra ix. 13. "Seeing thou, our God, hast "given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy "commandments?" Ingenuous souls have felt the force of the obligations of love and mercy upon them.

(5.) To conclude, The mercies of God to others have been as oil to the wheels of their obedience, and made them fitter for services, 2 Chron. xvii. 5. Now if mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the spirit of any saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. *Season*, 'The second special season in the life of a christian re-'quiring more than a common diligence to keep his heart, is *the* '*time of adversity*; When providence frowns upon you, and blasts 'your outward comforts, then look to your hearts, keep them with 'all diligence from repining against God, or fainting under his 'hand; for troubles though sanctified, are troubles still; even 'sweet-brier, and holy thistles, have their prickles. Jonah was a 'good man, and yet how pettish was his heart under affliction? Job 'was the mirror of patience, yet how was his heart discomposed by 'trouble? You will find it as hard to get a composed spirit under 'great afflictions, as it is to fix quick-silver. O the hurries and tu-'mults which they occasion even in the best hearts! Well, then, 'the second case will be this:'

Case 2. *How a Christian under great afflictions may keep his heart from repining, or desponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine special helps. I shall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the first shall be this, to work upon your hearts this great truth,

1. *That by these cross providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great design of electing love upon the souls of his people, and orders all these afflictions as means sanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by casualty, but by counsel, Job v. 6. Eph. i. 11. by this counsel of God they are ordained as means of much spiritual good to saints, Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this shall the iniquity "of Jacob be purged," &c. Heb. xii. 10. "But he for our profit," &c. Rom. viii. 28. "All things work together for good." They are God's workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, Psalm. cxix. 71. "It is good "for me that I have been afflicted." And sure, then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it. Philip. iii. 11. "Paul could bless God, if by any "means he might attain the resurrection of the dead. My brethren, "(saith James) count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations," Jam. i. 2, 3. My father is about a design of love upon my soul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in pursuance of, and in reference to some eternal, glorious ends upon my soul. O it is my ignorance of God's design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to Peter, "What I do "thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it."

Help 2. *Though God hath reserved to himself a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tied up his own hands by promise never to take away his loving-kindness from them.* Can I look that scripture in the face with a repining, discontented spirit, 2 Sam. vii. 14. "I shall be his father, and he will be my son; if he commit iniquity, "I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of

"the children of men: Nevertheless, my mercy shall not depart "away from him." O my heart! my haughty heart! dost thou well to be discontented, when God hath given thee the whole tree, with all the clusters of comfort growing on it, because he suffers the wind to blow down a few leaves; Christians have two sorts of goods, the goods of the throne, and the goods of the footstool; moveables, and immoveables: If God have secured these, never let my heart be troubled at the loss of those; indeed, if he had cut off his love, or discovenanted my soul, I had reason to be cast down; but this he hath not, nor can he do it.

Help 3. It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the heart from sinking under affliction, *to call to mind, that thine own father hath the ordering of them:* Not a creature moves hand or tongue against thee, but by his permission. Suppose the cup be a bitter cup, yet it is the cup which thy father hath given thee to drink; and canst thou suspect poison to be in that cup which he delivers thee? Foolish man, put home the case to thine own heart, consult with thine own bowels; canst thou find in thy heart to give thy child that which would hurt, or undo him? No, thou wouldest as soon hurt thyself as him; "If "thou then being evil knowest how to give good gifts to thy chil-"dren," how much more doth God? Matth. vii. 11. The very consideration of his nature, a God of love, pity, and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee as a Father, Husband, Friend, might be security enough, if he had not spoken a word, to quiet thee in this case; and yet you have his word too, Jer. xxv. 6. *I will do you no hurt.* You lie too near his heart to hurt you; nothing grieves him more than your groundless and unworthy suspicions of his designs do; would it not grieve a faithful, tender-hearted physician when he hath studied the case of his patient, prepared the most excellent receipts to save his life, to hear him cry out, O he hath undone me! he hath poisoned me; because it gripes and pains him in the operation? O when will you be ingenious!

Help 4. *God respects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not so much trouble you to be made low:* nay, to speak home, he manifests, more of his love, grace, and tenderness, in the time of affliction, than prosperity. As God did not at first choose you because you were high, so he will not forsake you because you are low: Men may look shy upon you, and alter their respects, as your condition is altered. When providence hath blasted your estates, your summer friends may grow strange, as fearing you may be troublesome to them; but will God do so? No, no! "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Indeed if adversity and poverty could bar you from access to God, it were a sad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever. "My God (saith the church) will hear me," Mic. vii. 7. Poor David, when stripped of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himself in the Lord his God; and why can-

not you? Suppose your husband or child had lost all at sea, and should come to you in rags; could you deny the relation, or refuse to entertain him? If you would not, much less would God: Why then are ye so troubled? Though your condition be changed, your Father's love and respects are not changed.

Help 5. *And what if by the loss of outward comforts, God will preserve your souls from the ruining power of temptation? Sure then, you have little cause to sink your hearts by such sad thoughts about them.* Are not these earthly enjoyments the things that made men shrink and warp in times of trial? For the love of these many have forsaken Christ in such an hour, Matth. xix. 22. "He went away sorrow-"ful, for he had great possessions." And if this be God's design, what have I done in quarrelling with him about it? We see mariners in a storm can throw over-board rich bales of silk, and precious things, to preserve the vessel and their lives with it, and every one saith they act prudently; we know it is usual for soldiers in a city besieged, to batter down, or burn the fairest buildings without the walls, in which the enemy may shelter in the siege; and no man doubts but it is wisely done; Such as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly stretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the chirurgeon for his pains: And must God only be repined at, for casting over what will sink you in a storm? For pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in the siege of temptation? For cutting off what would endanger your everlasting life? O inconsiderate, ungrateful man! are not these things, for which thou grievest, the very things that have ruined thousands of souls? Well, what Christ doth in this, thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou mayest.

Help 6. It would much stay the heart under adversity, to consider *That God, by such humbling providences, may be accomplishing that for which you have long prayed and waited:* And should you be troubled at that? Say, Christian, hast thou not many prayers depending before God upon such accounts as these: that he would keep thee from sin, discover to thee the emptiness and insufficiency of the creature; that he would kill and mortify thy lusts, that thy heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but Christ? Why now, by such humbling and impoverishing strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire: Wouldst thou be kept from sin? Lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns.* Wouldst thou see the creature's vanity? Thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it. Wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? This is the way; now God takes away the food and fuel that maintained them; for as prosperity begat and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a mean to kill them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pul-

ling from under thy head, that soft pillow of creature delights on which thou restedst before? And yet thou fret at this, peevish child! how dost thou exercise thy Father's patience? If he delay to answer thy prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not; if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrellest with him for that: as if instead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aims; is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest.

Help 7. Again, It may stay thy heart, if thou consider, *That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy soul would rejoice.* We, poor creatures, are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular providences work towards God's end; and therefore, like Israel in the wilderness, are often murmuring, because Providence leads us about in a howling desart, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a city of habitations.* If you could but see how God, in his secret counsel, hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy salvation, even to the smallest means and circumstances; this way, and by these means such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they shall befal him thus, and thus they shall work for him: Could you, I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general respect and influence they all have unto the last end; of all the conditions in the world, you would chuse that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of arras, made up of a thousand shreds, which single we know not what to make of, but put together, and stitched up orderly, they represent a beautiful history to the eye. As God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, so that the counsel of God hath ordained this as the best way to bring about thy salvation; Such a one hath a proud heart, so many humbling providences I appointed for him: such a one an earthly heart, so many impoverishing providences for him: Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected heart.

Help 8. Farther, It would much conduce to the settlement of your hearts, to consider, *That by fretting and discontent, you do yourselves more injury than all the afflictions you lie under could do;* your own discontent is that which arms your troubles with a sting; it is you that make your burden heavy, by struggling under it. Could you but lie quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much easier and sweeter than it is; *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit medicum.* This makes God lay on more strokes, as a father will upon a stubborn child that receives not correction.

Besides, it unfits the soul to pray over its troubles, or take in the sense of that good which God intends by them: Affliction is a pill, which being wrapt up in patience and quiet submission, may be easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill and so embitters the soul; God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an arrow which sticks in your clothes, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin: and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts by despondency and discontent.

Help 9. Lastly, If all this will not do, but thy heart, like Rachel, still refuses to be comforted, or quieted, then consider one thing more, which, if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work; and that is this, *Compare the condition thou art now in, and art so much dissatisfied with, with that condition others are, and thyself deservest to be in:* Others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. O my soul! is this hell? Is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thousands now in hell give to change conditions with me! It is a famous instance which * Dr. Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde; 'I have 'read (saith he) that when the duke of Conde had entered voluntarily 'into the incommodities of a religious poverty, he was one day espied 'and pitied by a lord of Italy, who out of tenderness wished him 'to be more careful and nutritive of his person. The good duke 'answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided 'of conveniences, for I send an harbinger before me, who makes 'ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. 'The lord asked him who was his harbinger? he answered, The 'knowledge of myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for 'my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge 'I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks 'it is ever better than I deserve.' *Why doth the living man complain?* And thus the heart my be kept from desponding, or repining under adversity.

Season 3. 'The third season calling for more than ordinary dili-'gence to keep the heart, is the time of Zion's troubles: When the 'church, like the ship in which Christ and his disciples were, is op-'pressed, and ready to perish in the waves of persecution; then good 'souls are ready to sink, and be shipwrecked too, upon the billows 'of their own fears. I confess most men rather need the spur than 'the reins in this case, and yet some sit down as over-weighed with 'the sense of the church's troubles. The loss of the ark cost old Eli 'his life; the sad posture Jerusalem lay in, made good Nehemiah's 'countenance change in the midst of all the pleasures and accom-'modations of the court, Neh. ii. 2. Ah! this goes close to honest 'hearts.'

* Great Exemp. p. 310.

'But though God allow, yea, command the most awakened appre-
'hensions of these calamities, and in "such a day to call to mourning,
'weeping, and girding with sackcloth," Isa. xxii. 12. and severely
'threaten the insensible, Amos vi. 1. yet it will not please him to
'see you sit like pensive Elijah under the juniper-tree. 1 Kings
'xix. 4. "Ah Lord God! it is enough, take away my life also."
'No, mourners in Zion you may, and ought to be; but self-tormen-
'tors you must not be; complain to God you may, but to complain
'of God, though but by an unsuitable carriage, and the language
'of your actions, you must not.'

Case 3. The third case that comes next to be spoken to is this; *How public and tender hearts may be relieved and supported when they are overweighed with the burdensome sense of Zion's troubles?*

'I grant, it is hard for him that preferreth Zion to his chief joy, to
'keep his heart that it sink not below the due sense of its troubles;
'and yet this ought, and may be done by the use of such heart-
'establishing directions as these.

Direction 1. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befals Zion, but by the permission of Zion's God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at last to his people.*

There is truly a principle of quietness in the permitting, as in the commanding will of God. See it in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. "Let "him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:" And in Christ, John xix. 11. "Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were "given thee from above;" it should much calm our spirits that it is the will of God to suffer it; and had he not suffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very consideration quieted Job, Eli, David, and Hezekiah; that the Lord did it was enough to them, and why should it not be so to us? If the Lord will have Zion plowed as a field, and her goodly stones lie in the dust; if it be his pleasure that Antichrist shall rage yet longer, and wear out the saints of the Most High; if it be his will that a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of hosts shall be upon the valley of vision, that the wicked shall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we should contest with God? Fit it is that we should be resigned up to that will whence we proceeded, and that he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth: he may do what seemeth him good without our consent: doth poor man stand upon equal ground, that he should capitulate with his Creator, or that God should render him an account of any of his matters? It is every way as reasonable we be content, however God dispose of us, as that we be obedient to whatever he commands us.

But then, if we pursue this argument further by considering that God's permissions do all meet at last in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our spirits. Do the enemies carry away the good figs, even the best among the people into captivity? This looks

like a sad providence, but yet God sends them thither for their good, Jer. xxiv. 5. Doth God take the Assyrian as a staff in his hand to beat his people with? Those blows are smart, and make them cry; but the end of his so doing is, "That he may accomplish his whole "work upon mount Zion," Isa. x. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worst and greatest evil of sin, much more out of temporal afflictions; and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdom of a common agent to permit any thing, which he might prevent if he pleased, to cross his great design and end: and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so?

Well then, as Luther told Melancthon, *Desinat Philippus esse rector mundi;* so say I to you; Let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone; for by these all creatures are swayed, and actions guided, in reference to the church; it is none of our work to rule the world, but to submit to him that doth: *Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ;* the motions of providence are all judicious, the wheels are full of eyes; it is enough that the affairs of Zion are in a good hand.

Direction 2. Ponder this heart-supporting truth, in reference to Zion's trouble: *That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What! hath the Lord forsaken his churches? Hath he sold them into the enemy's hand? doth he not regard what evils befals them? that our hearts sink at this rate? Is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the great God, and too much magnifying of poor, impotent men, to fear and tremble at creatures, whilst God is in the midst of us? The church's enemies are many and mighty; let that be granted, yet that argument with which Caleb and Joshua strove to raise their own hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: "The "Lord is with us, fear them not," Num. xiv. 9. The historian tells us, that when Antigonus over-heard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and so discouraging one another; he suddenly steps in among them with this question, 'And how many (said he) 'do you reckon me for?' Discouraged souls, how many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an over match for all his enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many mighties? Doth his presence stand for nothing with us? "If God be for us, who can be "against us?" Rom. viii. 31. What think you, was the reason of that great exploration Gideon made in Judg. vi.? He questions, ver. 12, 13. he desires a sign, ver. 17. and after that another, ver. 36. and what was the end of all this, but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this motto upon his ensign? "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." So then, if you can be well assured the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your discouragements: and that he is so, you need not, with him, desire a sign from heaven; lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If

God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? No, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is Exod. xxxiii. 14. let his presence give us rest; and though the mountains be hurled into the sea, though heaven and earth mingle together, fear not, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

Direction 3. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted state in the world be really best for the church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful; indeed, if you estimate the happiness of the church by its worldly ease, splendour, and prosperity, then such times will seem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to consist in its humility, faith, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, no condition in the world abounds with advantages for these, as an afflicted condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but worldliness and wantonness, that was the poison of the church: neither was it the earthly glory of its professors, but the bood of its martyrs, that was the seed of the church. The power of godliness did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greatest prosperity: when "we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to "trust in the name of the Lord," Zeph. iii. 12. What say ye, sirs? Is it indeed for the saint's advantage to be weaned from the love of, and delight in ensnaring worldly vanities! To be quickened, and pricked forward with more haste to heaven, to have clearer discoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, spiritually: to look and long for the rest to come, more ardently? If these be for their advantage, experience teaches us, that no condition is ordinarily blessed with such fruits as these, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done, then, to repine and droop because your Father consults more the advantage of your souls, than the pleasing of your humours? Because he will bring you a nearer way to heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thousands in the world, upon whom he will not lay a rod, or spend an affliction for their good, Hos. iv. 17. Mat. xv. 14. But alas! we judge by sense, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we, for the present, can taste and feel in them.

Direction 4. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidst all their troubles.*

It is a pity that our tears, upon the account of our troubles, should so blear and blind our eyes, that we should not see our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not insist upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniencies and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Christ and his precious servants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what say you to pardon of sin? interest in Christ? the covenant of promise? and an eternity of happiness, in the presence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people entitled to such mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of men, and loss of trifles! you have not the smiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God; you are, it may be, cast back in your estates, but thereby furthered in spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully, and easily, as before; but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever: will you then grieve so much for these circumstantials, as to forget your substantials? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the church's true riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor, but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish, in his outward dispensations, betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? What though an Abel be killed in love, and a Cain survive in hatred; a bloody Dionysius die in his bed, and a good Josiah fall in battle? What though the belly of the wicked be filled with hidden treasures, and the teeth of the saints broken with gravel-stones; yet still here is much matter of praise; for electing love has distinguished, though common providence did not; and whilst prosperity and impunity slay the wicked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and save the righteous.

Direction 5. *Believe, that how low soever the church be plunged under the waters of adversity, it shall assuredly rise again.* Fear not, for as sure as Christ arose the third day, notwithstanding the seal and watch that were upon him; so sure the church shall arise out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head over all its enemies: there is no fear of ruining that people who thrive by their losses, and multiply by being diminished. O be not too quick to bury the church before she is dead! stay till Christ hath tried his skill, before you give it up for lost. The bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good will of him that dwelleth in it.

Direct. 6. *Record the famous instances of God's care and tenderness over his people in former straits.* Christ hath not suffered it to be devoured yet; for above these 1700 years the Christian church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed; many a wave of persecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many designs to ruin it, and hitherto none have prospered; this is not the first time that Hamans and Ahithophels have plotted its ruin; that an Herod hath stretched out his hand to vex it: still it hath been preserved from, supported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is he not as able to save it now, as formerly? Though we know not whence deliverance should arise, "Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out "of temptations," 2 Pet. ii. 9.

Direction 7. If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former arguments, then, in the last place, *Try whether you cannot draw some comfort out of your very troubles.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of sympathy; if you had not some rich adventure in that ship, you would not tremble as you do, when it is in danger: besides, this frame of spirit may afford you this argument, that if you be sensible of the church's troubles, Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and solicitous about it, than you can be; and he will have an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, Isa. lvii. 18.

Season 4. 'The fourth special season of expressing our utmost dili-'gence in keeping our hearts, is the time of danger and public dis-'traction; in such times the best hearts are but too apt to be sur-'prized by slavish fear; it is not easy to secure the heart against dis-'tractions in times of common distraction. If Syria be confederate 'with Ephraim, how do the hearts of the house of David shake, 'even as the trees of the wood, which are shaken with the wind? 'Isa. vii. 2. When there are ominous signs in the heaven; on the 'earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roar-'ing, then the hearts of men fail for fear, and for looking after those 'things which are coming on the earth, Luke xxi. 25, 26. Even a 'Paul himself may "Sometimes complain of fightings within, when "there are fears without," 2 Cor. vii. 5.

But, my brethren, these things ought not to be so, saints should be of a more raised spirit: So was David, when his heart was kept in a good frame, Psal. xxvii. 1. "The Lord is my light, and my salvation; "whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom "shall I be afraid?" Let none but the servants of sin be the slaves of fear, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil; *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatened as a judgment upon the wicked, ever seize upon the breasts of the righteous. "I will send (saith God) faintness into their hearts in the "land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaking leaf shall chase "them," Lev. xxvi. 36. O what poor-spirited men are these, to fly at a shaking leaf! which makes a pleasant, and not a terrible noise; and is in itself a kind of natural music: But to a guilty conscience the whistling leaves are drums and trumpets. "But God hath not given "us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. A sound mind as it stands there in opposition to the spirit of fear, is an unwounded conscience, not infirmed by guilt: And this should make a man as bold as a lion. I know it cannot be said of a saint what God spake of Leviathan, that he is made without fear: There is a natural fear in every man, and it is as impossible to be wholly put off as the body itself is: *It is a preturbation of the mind, arising from the apprehension of approaching danger;* and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. It is not my purpose to commend to you a stoical apathy, nor yet to take you off from such

a degree of cautional, preventive fear as may fit you for trouble, and be serviceable to your souls; there is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foresee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it: Such was Jacob's fear, Gen. xxxii. 7, 9, 10, &c. But it is the fear of diffidence I persuade you to keep your hearts from; that tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger; distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty; drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, the fourth case willl be this:

Case 4. *How a Christian may keep his heart from distracting and tormenting fears, in times of great and threatening dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent rules, or helps, for the keeping the heart from sinful fear, when imminent dangers threaten us: And the first is this,

Rule 1. *Look upon all the creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions, limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.*

Get this truth well settled by faith in your hearts; it will marvellously guard them against slavish fears. The first chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme, or draught of providence; there you may see the living creatures who move the wheels, viz. the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the throne, to receive new orders and instructions from him, ver. 24, 25, 26. And in Rev. vi. you read of white, black, and red horses, which are nothing else but the instruments which God employs in executing his judgments in the world, as wars, pestilence, and death: But when these horses are prancing, and trampling up and down the world, here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are sometimes like mad horses, they would stamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of providence is in their lips, Job i. 11, 12. A lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the lion in the keeper's hand?

Rule 2. *Remember that this God, in whose hand all the creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you, than you are, or can be, over yourselves:* "He that toucheth you, toucheth the "apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8. Let me ask the most timorous woman, whether there be not a vast difference between the sight of a drawn sword in the hand of a bloody ruffian, and the same sword in the hand of her own tender husband? As great a difference there is in looking upon creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of faith; that is a sweet scripture to this purpose, Isa. liv. 5. "Thy maker is thy Husband, the "Lord of Hosts is his name:" he is Lord of all the hosts of creatures in the world: Who would be afraid to pass through an army, though all the soldiers should turn their swords and guns towards him, if

the general of that army were his friend, or father? I have met with an excellent story of a religious young man, who being at sea, with many other passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very cheerful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger: One of them demanding the reason of his cheerfulness, 'O, (said he) it is because the pilot 'of the ship is my father.' Consider Christ, first as the King, and supreme Lord over the providential kingdom, and then as your Head, Husband, and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, "Return "unto thy rest, O my soul." This truth will make you cease trembling, and cause you to sing in the midst of dangers. Psal. xlvii. 7. "The Lord is King of all the earth, sing ye praise with understand-"ing;" "(or, as the Hebrew word is,) Every one that hath under-"standing," viz. of this heart-reviving and establishing doctrine of the dominion of our Father over all the creatures.

Rule 3. *Urge upon your hearts the express prohibitions of Christ in this case: and let your hearts stand in awe of the violations of them.*

He hath charged you not to fear, Luke xxi. 9. "When ye shall "hear of wars and commotions, see that ye be not terrified." And Phil. i. 28. "In nothing be terrified by your adversaries." Yea, in Matth. x. 26, 28, 31. and within the compass of six verses, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth every big word of proud dust and ashes make thee afraid? Doth the voice of a man make thee tremble? and shall not the voice of God: If thou art of such a fearful and timorous spirit, how is it that thou fearest not to disobey the flat commands of Jesus Christ? Methinks the command of Christ should have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrify thy heart. Isa. li. 12, 13. "I, even I, am he that "comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a "man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as "the grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?" We cannot fear creatures sinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath said, we should not be of such feeble spirits: Bring thy heart, then, to this dilemma in times of danger; if I let into my heart the slavish fear of man, I must let out the reverential awe and fear of God; and dare I cast off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? Shall I lift up proud dust above the great God? Shall I run upon a certain sin, to shun a probable danger? O keep thy heart by this consideration!

Rule 4. *Remember how much needless trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have disquieted yourselves to no purpose.*

Isa. li. 13. "And hast feared continually because of the oppressor, "as if he were ready to devour; and where is the fury of the op-"pressor?" He seemed ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured: I have not brought upon you the thing that you feared; you have wasted your spirits, disordered your souls, and weakened your hands,

and all this to no purpose: You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan, managing a design against the soul by these vain fears: I call them vain, in regard of the frustration of them by Providence; but certainly they are not in vain, as to the end Satan aims at in raising them; for herein he acts as soldiers use do in the siege of a garrison, who on purpose to wear out the besieged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give them false alarms, which though they come to nothing, yet doth notably serve this further design of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satan's devices?

Rule 5. Consider solemnly, *That though the things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear, than in the thing feared;*

And that not only as the least evil of sin is worse than the greatest evil of suffering; but as this sinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it, than is in that condition you are so much afraid of: fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting passion; it represents troubles much greater than they are, and so tortures and wrecks the soul much worse than when the suffering itself comes. So it was with Israel at the Red-sea, they cried out, and were sore afraid, till they put foot in the water, and then a passage was opened through those waters, which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us; we look through the glass of carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the swellings of Jordan, cry out, O they are unfordable! me must needs perish in them: But when we come into the midst of those floods, indeed we find the promise made good; "God will "make a way to escape," 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus it was with blessed Bilney, when he would make a trial, by putting his finger to the candle, and not able to endure that, he cried out, 'What, cannot I 'bear the burning of a finger? how then shall I be able to bear the 'burning of my whole body to-morrow?' And yet when that morrow came, he could go cheerfully into the flames, with that scripture in his mouth, Isa. xliii. 1, 2, 3. "Fear not, for I have redeemed "thee: I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou "passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walk-"est through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt."

Rule 6. *Consult the many precious promises which are written for your support and comfort in all dangers.*

These are your refuges to which you may fly and be safe; "When "the arrows of danger fly by night, and destruction wasteth at noon "day." There are particular promises suited to particular cases and exigencies; and there are general promises, reaching all cases and conditions: Such are these, Rom. viii. 28. "All things shall work to-"gether for good," &c. And Eccles. viii. 12. "Though a sinner "do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it shall

" be well with them that fear the Lord." &c. " Could you but be-
" lieve the promises, your hearts should be established," 2 Chron. xx. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as Jacob did. Gen. xxxii. 12. " Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good," &c. they would relieve you in every distress.

Objection. *But that promise was made personally, and by name to him, so are not these to me.*

Answer. If Jacob's God be your God, you have as good an interest in them as he had. The church, a thousand years after that transaction betwixt God and Jacob, applied that which God spake to him, as if it had been spoken to themselves, Hos. xii. 4. He " found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us."

Rule 7. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and consulting your past experiences of the care and faithfulness of God in former distresses.*

These experiences are food for your faith in a wilderness condition, Psal. lxxiv. 14. By this David kept his heart in time of danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. and Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was sweetly answered by Silentiarius, when one told him that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habit, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how have I escaped hitherto? you may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones; for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how Moses pleads on that account with God, Numb. xiv. 19. " Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, " as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt until now." He doth not say as men do, Lord, this is the first fault, thou hast not been troubled before to sign their pardon: But, Lord, because thou hast pardoned them so often, I beseech thee pardon them once again. So in new straits, Lord, thou hast often heard, helped, and saved in former fears; therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not shortened.

Rule 8. *Be well satisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.*

" Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" " 1 Pet. iii. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, " you may boldly com-
" mit yourselves to God in well-doing," 1 Pet. iv. 19. It was this consideration that raised Luther's spirit above all fear: ' In the cause ' of God (said he) I ever am, and ever shall be stout;' herein I assume this title, *Cedo nulli*, a good cause will bear up a man's spirit bravely. Hear the saying of a * heathen, to the shame of cowardly Christians: ' When the emperor Vespasian had commanded Fluidius ' Priscus not to come to the senate; or if he did, to speak nothing ' but what he would have him; the senator returned this noble an-
' swer, That as he was a senator, it was fit he should be at the senate; ' and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would

* Char. of Wisdom, p. 358.

'speak freely that which his conscience commanded him; the em-
'peror threatening then that he should die, he answered, Did I ever
'tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will
'do what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjustly,
'and in me to die constantly.'

Righteousness is a breast-plate, the cause of God will pay all your expences; let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

Rule 9. *Get your consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ from all guilt, and that will set your hearts above all fear.*

It is guilt upon the conscience that softens and cowardizes our spirits: "The righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. It was guilt in Cain's conscience that made him cry, "Every one that "meets me shall slay me," Gen. iv. 14. A guilty conscience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure conscience is with real ones. A guilty sinner carries a witness against himself in his own bosom. It was guilty Herod cried out, "John Baptist is risen "from the dead." Such a conscience is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all those swords and spears, with which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself; guilt is to danger what fire is to gun-powder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder if he have no fire about him.

Rule 10. *Exercise holy trust in times of great distress.*

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at rest about them. So did David, Psal. lvii. 3. "At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;" q. d. Lord, if at any time a storm rise, I will make bold to shelter me from it under the covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and trust, and never doubt but he will secure you, Isa. lxii. 3. "Thou "wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, be-"cause he trusteth in thee." God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; "Father, my life, my liberty, or estate, are hunted "after, and I cannot secure them; O let me leave them in thy hand: "The poor leaveth himself with thee;" and doth his God fail him? No, "thou art the helper of the fatherless," Psal. x. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the destitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a sweet scripture, Psal. cxii. 7. "He shall not be "afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord;" he doth not say, his ear shall be privileged from the report of evil tidings, he may hear as sad tidings as other men, but his heart shall be privileged from the terror of those tidings, "his heart is fixed."

Rule 11. *Consult the honour of religion more, and your personal safety less.*

Is it for the honour of religion, think you, that Christians should be as timorous as hares, to start at every sound? Will not this tempt the world to think, that whatever you talk, yet your principles are no better than other men's? O what mischief may the discoveries of

your fears before them do! It was a noble saying of Nehemiah, chap. vi. 11. "Should such a man as I flee? And who, being as I am, "would flee?" Were it not better you should die, than that the world should be prejudiced against Christ by your example? For, alas! how apt is the world, who judge more by what they see in your practices, than by what they understand of your principles, to conclude from your timorousness, that how much soever you commend faith, and talk of assurance, yet you dare trust to those things no more than they when it comes to the trial. O let not your fears lay such a stumbling-block before the blind world.

Rule 12. *He that will secure his heart from fear, must first secure the eternal interest of his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ.*

When this is done, then you may say, *Now world do thy worst.* You will not be very solicitous about a vile body, when you are once assured it shall be well to all eternity with your precious souls. "Fear not them (saith Christ) that can kill the body, and after that "have no more that they can do." The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his enemies, and say, Is this the worst that you do? What say you, Christians? Are you assured that your souls are safe, that within a few moments of your dissolution they shall be received by Christ into an everlasting habitation? Well, if you be sure of that, never trouble yourselves about the instruments and means of your dissolution.

Objection. *O, but a violent death is terrible to nature!*

Answer. But what matter is it, when thy soul is in heaven, whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? Whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies, stand about thy dead body, and close thine eyes? Alas! it is not worth the making so much to do about; *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in cœlo*, thy soul shall not be sensible in heaven how thy body is used on earth; no, it shall be swallowed up in life.

Rule 13. *Learn to quench all slavish creature-fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a cure by diversion: It is a rare piece of Christian wisdom to turn those passions of the soul which most predominate into spiritual channels; to turn natural anger into spiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy cheerfulness, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of cure Christ prescribes in that forementioned place, Mat. x. like to that which is in Isa. viii. 12, 13. *fear not their fear;* but how shall we help it? Why, "sanc- "tify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your "dread." Natural fear may be allayed for the present by natural reason, or the removal of the occasion, but then it is but like a candle blown out with a puff of breath, which is easily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguish it, then it is like a candle quenched in water, which cannot easily be rekindled.

Rule 14. Lastly, *Pour out those fears to God in prayer, which the devil and your own unbelief pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the best out-let to fear; where is the Christian that cannot set his *probatum est* to this direction? I will give you the greatest example in the world to encourage you in the use of it, even the example of Jesus Christ, Mark xiv. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh, he gets into the garden, separates from the disciples, and there wrestles mightily with God in prayer, even unto an agony: in reference to which the apostle saith, Heb. v. 7. "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers "and supplications, with strong cries and tears, to him that was able "to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." He was heard as to strength and support to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, O that these things might abide with you, and be reduced to practice in these evil days, that many trembling souls may be established by them.

Season 5. 'The fifth season to excite this diligence in keeping the 'heart, is a time of straits and outward pinching wants; although 'at such times we should complain to God, and not of God, (the 'throne of grace being erected for a time of need, Heb. iv. 16.) yet 'when the waters of relief run low, and want begins to pinch hard, 'how prone are the best hearts to distrust the fountain! when the 'meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse are almost spent, our 'faith and patience are almost spent too. Now it is difficult to keep 'down the proud and unbelieving heart in an holy quietude and 'sweet submission at the foot of God: It is an easy thing to talk of 'trusting God for daily bread, while we have a full barn or purse: 'but to say as the prophet, Hab. iii. 17. "Though the fig-tree 'should not blossom, neither fruit be in the vine, &c. yet will I re-'joice in the Lord:" surely this is not easy.' The fifth case therefore shall be this:

Case 5. *How a Christian may keep his heart from distrusting God, or repining against him, when outward wants are either felt or feared.*

This case deserves to be seriously pondered, and especially to be studied now, since it seems to be the design of providence to empty the people of God of their creature-fulness, and acquaint them with those straits which hitherto they have been altogether strangers to.

Now, to secure the heart from the fore-mentioned dangers attending this condition, these following considerations, through the blessing of the Spirit, may prove effectual. And the first is this;

Consideration 1. *That if God reduce you to straits and necessities, yet he deals no otherwise therein with you, than he hath done with some of the choicest and holiest men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not singular; though you have hitherto been strangers to wants, other saints have daily conversed, and been

familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed Paul speaks, not of himself only, but in the name of other saints reduced to like exigencies, 1 Cor. iv. 11. "Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place." To see such a man as Paul going up and down the world with a naked back, and empty belly, and not a house to put his head in, one that was so far above thee in grace and holiness, one that did more service for God in a day, than perhaps thou hast done in all thy days, and yet you repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what necessities and straits even a David hath suffered? How great was his straits and necessities? 1 Sam. xxv. 8. "Give, I pray thee (saith he to Nabal) whatsoever cometh to thy hand, to thy servants, and to thy son David." Renowned Musculus was forced to dig in the town ditch for a maintenance. Famous Ainsworth (as I have been credibly informed) was forced to sell the bed he lay on to buy bread. But what speak I of these? Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, "who is the heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made;" yet sometimes would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, Mark xi. 12, 13. "And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came if haply he might find [any thing] thereon."

Well then, hereby God hath set no mark of hatred upon you, neither can you infer the want of love from the want of bread. When thy repining heart puts the question, Was there ever any sorrow like unto mine? Ask these worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou dost, yet they were driven to as great straits as thou art.

Consid. 2. *If God leave you not in this necessitous condition without a promise, you have no reason to repine or despond under it.*

This is a sad condition indeed to which no promise belongs. I remember Mr. Calvin, upon these words, Isa. ix. 1. "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation," &c. solves the doubt, in what sense the darkness of the captivity was not so great as the lesser incursions made by Tiglath Pileser. In the captivity the city was destroyed, and the temple burnt with fire, there was no comparison in the affliction; but yet the darkness should not be such, and the reason (saith he) is this, *Huic certam promissionem esse additam, cum in priorbus nulla esset;* i. e. there was a certain promise made to this, but none to the other.

It is better to be as low as hell with a promise, than in paradise without one. Even the darkness of hell itself would be comparatively no darkness at all, were there but a promise to enlighten it. Now God hath left many sweet promises for the faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition: such are these: Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10. "O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the

" Lord shall want nothing that is good." Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19. " The " eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in fa- " mine." Ps. lxxxiv. 11. " No good thing will he with-hold from them " that walk uprightly." Rom. viii. 32. " He that spared not his " own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with " him also freely give us all things?" Isa. xli. 17. " When the poor " and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue " faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel " will not forsake them." Here you see, first, their extreme wants, water being put even for the necessaries of life. (2.) Their certain relief, *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is supposed that they cry unto him in their straits, and he hears their cry.

Having therefore these promises, why should not your distrustful hearts conclude like David's, Psal. xxiii. 1. " The Lord is my " Shepherd, I shall not want."

Objection. *But these promises imply conditions: if they were absolute, they would afford more satisfaction.*

Solution. What are those tacit conditions you speak of but these: (1.) That either he will supply or sanctify your wants: (2.) That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you. And doth this trouble you? Would you have the mercy whether sanctified or no? Whether God sees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of saints after earthly things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any enjoyment, not caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants pinch, and we see not whence supplies should come, then your faith in the promise shakes, and we, like murmuring Israel cry, " He gave bread, can he give water also?" O unbelieving hearts! When did his promise fail? Whoever trusted them, and was ashamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreasonable infidelity; as Jer. ii. 31. " Have I been a wilderness unto you?" &c. Or as Christ said to the disciples, " Since I was with you, lacked " ye any thing?" Yea, may you not upbraid yourselves, may you not say with good old Polycarp, These many years I have served Christ, and found him a good master. Indeed he may deny what your wantonness, but not what your real wants call for. He will not regard the cry of your lusts, nor yet despise the cry of your faith; though he will not indulge and humour your wanton appetites, yet he will not violate his own faithful promises. These promises are your best security for eternal life; and it is strange if they should not satisfy you for daily bread: remember ye the words of the Lord, and solace your hearts with them amidst all your wants. It is said of Epicurus, that in the dreadful fits of the cholic, he often refreshed himself, *Ob memoriam inventorum*,—by calling to mind his inventions in philosophy: and of Possidonius the philosopher, that in a great fit of the stone he solaced himself with discourses of moral duty; and when the pain twinged him, he would say, *Nihil agis, dolor; quamvis sis molestus, nunquam confitebor te esse malum*:—O pain, thou dost

nothing: though thou art a little troublesome, I will never confess thee to be evil. If upon such grounds as these they could support themselves under such grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diseases by them, how much rather should the precious promises of God, and the sweet experiences which have gone along step by step with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you in every strait.

Consid. 3. *If it be bad now, it might have been worse; hath God denied thee the comforts of this life? He might have denied thee Christ, peace, and pardon also, and then thy case had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done so to millions in the world: how many such wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope, are miserable here, and will be so to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to sweeten it; no, not so much as an hope that it will be better. But it is not so with you, though you be poor in this world, "yet rich in faith, and heirs of the "kingdom which God hath promised," Jam. ii. 5. O learn to set spiritual riches over against temporal poverty. Balance all your present troubles with your spiritual privileges. Indeed if God had denied your souls the robes of righteousness to clothe them, the hidden manna to feed them, the heavenly mansions to receive them; if your souls were left destitute as well as your bodies, you might well be pensive; but this consideration hath enough to bring the considering soul to rest under any outward strait. It was bravely said by Luther, when want began to pinch him, 'Let us be contented with our hard fare (said he,) for do not we feast with angels upon Christ the bread of life?" "And blessed be God (saith Paul) who hath abounded to us in all "spiritual blessings," Eph. i. 3.

Consid. 4. *This affliction, though great, is not such an affliction but God hath far greater, with which he chastises the dearly beloved of his soul in this world:* and should he remove this, and inflict those, you would account your present state a very comfortable state, and bless God to be as now you are.

What think ye, sirs? Should God remove your present troubles, supply all your outward wants, give you the desire of your hearts in creature comforts, but hide his face from you, shoot his arrows into your souls, and cause the venom of them to drink up your spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffeting of Satan, and his blasphemous injections; should he hold your eyes but a few nights waking with horrors of conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day: should he lead you through the chambers of death, shew you the visions of darkness, and make his terrors set themselves in array against you: Then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of conscience; and count bread and water, with God's favour, a happy state? O then, take heed of repining. Say not God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you, by your own

sense and feeling, that he hath worse rods than these for unsubmissive and froward children.

Consid. 5. *If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that consideration: the meal in the barrel is almost spent; well, be it so, why should that trouble me, if I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The traveller hath spent almost all his money, but a shilling or two left: well, saith he, though my money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finished too; I am near home, and then I shall be fully supplied. If there be no candles in the house, yet it is a comfort to think that it is almost day, and then there will be no need of candles. I am afraid, Christian, thou misreckonest thyself when thou thinkest thy provision is almost spent, and you have a great way to travel: many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may not be half so many as thou supposest; in this be confident, if thy provision be spent, either fresh supplies are coming, though thou seest not from whence, or thou art nearer thy journey's end than thou reckonest thyself to be. Desponding soul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to the heavenly city, and almost arrived there, within a few day's journey of his Father's house, where all his wants shall be supplied, to take on thus about a little meat, drink, or clothes which he fears he shall want by the way? It was a noble saying of the forty Martyrs, famous in the *Ecclesiastical story*, when turned out naked in a frosty night to be starved to death, with these words they comforted one another, δριμυς ο χειμων, *&c.* The winter indeed is sharp and cold, but heaven is warm and comfortable; here we shiver for cold, but Abraham's bosom will make amends for all.

Objection 1. *But I may die for want.*

Solution (1.) Who ever did so? When were the righteous forsaken? (2.) If so, your journey is ended, and you are fully supplied.

Objec. 2. *But I am not sure of that; were I sure of heaven, it were another matter.*

Sol. Are you not sure of that? Then you have other matters to trouble yourselves about than these: methinks these should be the least of all your cares: I do not find that souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Christ, pardon of sin, &c. are usually very anxious, or solicitous about these things. He that seriously puts such questions as these, What shall I do to be saved? How shall I know my sin is pardoned? doth not usually trouble himself with, "What "shall I eat, what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be clothed?"

Consid. 6. *Doth it become the children of such a Father to distrust his all-sufficiency, or repine at any of his dispensations;*

Do you well to question his care and love upon every new exigence? Say, have you not been ashamed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's seasonable provisions for you in former straits, put you to the blush, and made you resolve never to question his love and care any more? and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him

again? Disingenuous child! reason thus with thyself; if I perish for want of what is good and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to supply them: or else regards not what becomes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him? Not the first; for, Mark vi. 32. "My "Father knows what I have need of;" my condition is not hid from him: nor the second, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness "of it," Psal. xxiv. 1. His name is *God all-sufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. Not the last, for, "as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities "them that fear him," Ps. ciii. 13. "The Lord is exceedingly pitiful, "and of tender mercy," Jam. v. 11. "He hears the young ravens "when they cry," Job xxxviii. 41. and will he not hear me? "Con- "sider, saith Christ, the fowls of the air," Matth. vi. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowls of the air that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and clothe his enemies, and will he forget his children? He heard the very cry of Ishmael in distress, Gen. xvi. 17. O my unbelieving heart! dost thou yet doubt? Remember Hagar and the child.

Consid. 7. *Your poverty is not your sin, but your affliction only! if by sinful means you have not brought it upon yourselves; and if it be but an affliction, it may be borne the easier for that.*

It is hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and punishment of sin; when men are under trouble upon that account, they use to say, O! if it were but a single affliction coming from the hand of God by way of trial, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon myself by sin, it comes as the punishment of sin: the marks of God's displeasure are upon it; it is the guilt within that troubles and galls more than the want without.

But it is not so here, and therefore you have no reason to be cast down under it.

Objection. *But though there be no sting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other stings: As first, the discredit of religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to suffer.*

Solution. It is well you have an heart to discharge every duty, yet if God disable you by providence, it is no discredit to your profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your desire and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do; and in this case God's will is, that lenity and forbearance be exercised towards you, Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.

Object. 2. *But it grieves me to behold the necessities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refresh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot, it ceases to be your duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your soul to the hungry in compassion and desire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purse to relieve and supply them.

Object. 3. *But I find such a condition full of temptations, a sore clog in the way to heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the world hath its clogs and attending temptations; and were you in a prosperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: For though I confess poverty hath its temptations as well as prosperity, yet I am confident prosperity hath not these excellent advantages that poverty hath: For here you have an opportunity to discover the sincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, and find enough in him, and constantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have shewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition in the world, when want pinches, and the heart begins to sink, then improve and bless God for these helps to keep it.

Season 6. 'The sixth season of expressing this diligence in keeping 'the heart, is the season of duty; when we draw nigh to God in 'public, private, or secret duties, then it is time to look to the heart; 'for the vanity of the heart seldom discovers itself more than at such 'times. How oft doth the poor soul cry out, O Lord! how fain 'would I serve thee, but vain thoughts will not let me; I came to 'open my heart to thee, to delight my soul in communion with thee, 'but my corruptions have set upon me; Lord, call off these vain 'thoughts, and suffer them not to prostitute the soul which is es-'poused to thee before thy face.' The sixth case then is this,

Case 6. *How the heart may be kept from distractions by vain thoughts, in the time of duty.*

There is a twofold distraction or wandering of the heart in duty: (1.) Voluntary and habitual, Psalm lxxviii. 8. "They set not their "hearts aright, and their spirit was not steadfast with God." This is the case of formalists, and proceeds from the want of an holy bent and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their lust, and therefore it is no wonder they go after their lust, even when they are about holy things, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. (2.) Involuntary and lamented distractions, Rom. vii. 21—24. "I find "then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; "O wretched man that I am," &c. This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakness and imperfection of grace. And in this case the soul may make the like complaint against its own corruptions that Abijah did against Jeroboam, 2 Chron. xiii. 6, 7. "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat is risen up against his "lord, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could "not withstand him, and there are gathered unto him vain men, "the children of Belial." Grace hath dominion, but lusts are mutinous and seditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my business to shew you how these distractions come into the heart, but rather how to get and keep them out of the heart: in order whereunto take these ten following helps.

Help 1. Sequester yourselves from all earthly employments, and

set apart some time for solemn preparation to meet God in duty: You come reeking hot out of the world into God's presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties: It is with the heart a few minutes since plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, just as with the sea after a storm, which still continues working, muddy, and disquiet, though the wind be laid, and the storm over: Thy heart must have sometime to settle. There are few musicians that can take down a lute or viol, and play presently upon it, without some time to tune it; there are few Christians can presently say, as Psal. lvii. 7. "O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed." O when thou goest to God in any duty, take thy heart aside, and say, O my soul, I am now addressing myself to the greatest work that ever a creature was employed about: I am going into the awful presence of God about business of everlasting moment.

Oh my soul, leave trifling now, be composed, watchful, serious, this is no common-work; it is God-work, soul-work, eternity-work. I am now going forth bearing seed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come; pause a while upon thy sins, wants, troubles; keep thy thoughts a while on these before thou address thyself to duty. David first mused, and then spake with his tongue, Psalm xxxix. 3, 4. So Psal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing," &c.

Help 2. Having composed the heart by previous meditation, presently set a guard upon thy senses: How often are poor Christians in danger of losing the eyes of their mind by those of their body; for this Job covenanted with his senses, chap. xxxi. 1. for this David prayed, Psal. cxix. 37. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, "and quicken thou me in thy way." This may serve to expound that mystical Arabian proverb, which advises to 'shut the windows 'that the house may be light:' it were excellent if you could say in your outsets upon duty, as an holy man once did, when he came off from duty: *Claudimini, oculi mei, claudimini, &c.* 'Be shut, O 'mine eyes, be shut: for it is impossible you should ever see such 'beauty and glory in any creature, as I have now seen in God.' You had need avoid all occasions of distraction from without, for be sure you will meet enough from within. Intention of spirit in the work of God, locks up the eye and ear against vanity. When Marcellus entered the gates of Syracuse, Archimedes was so intent about his mathematical scheme, that he took no notice of the soldiers when they entered his very study with drawn swords; a *fervent* cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

Help 3. *Beg of God a mortified fancy.* A working fancy, saith one, how much soever it be extolled among men, is a great snare to the soul: except it work in fellowship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: The phantasy is a power of the soul placed between the senses and the understanding, it is that which first stirs itself in the soul, and by its motions the other powers are stirred; it is the common

shop where thoughts are first forged and framed, and as this is, so are they; if imaginations be not first cast down, it is impossible that every thought of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. The fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable power in the soul. Some Christians, especially such as are of hot and dry constitutions, have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more it is troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. O what a sad thing it is! that thy nobler soul must lackey up and down after a vain and roving fancy, that such a beggar should ride on horse-back, and such a prince run after on foot; that it should call off the soul from attendance upon God, when it is most sweetly engaged in communion with him, to prosecute such vanities as it will start at such times before it! beg earnestly of God that the power of sanctification may once come upon it. Some Christians have attained such a degree of sanctification of their fancies, that they have had much sweetness left upon their hearts by the spiritual workings of it in the night-season: When thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

Help 4. *If thou wouldst keep thy heart from those vain excursions, realize to thyself by faith, the holy and awful presence of God in duties.*

If the presence of a grave man will compose us to seriousness, how much more the presence of an holy God? Thinkest thou thy soul durst be so gay and light, if the sense of a divine eye were upon it? Remember the place where thou art is the place of his feet, Isa. lx. 13. act faith upon the omnisciency of God. "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the "heart, trieth the reins, and I will give to every one of you "according to your works," Rev. ii. 23. "All things are na- "ked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 12. Realize his infinite holiness; into what a serious, composed frame did the sight of God, in his holiness, put the spirit of the prophet? Isa. vi. 5. Labour also to get upon thy heart due apprehensions of the greatness of God, such as Abraham had, Gen. xviii. 27. "I that am but dust and ashes have taken upon me "to speak to God." And lastly, remember the jealousy of God, how tender he is over his worship, Lev. x. 3. "And Moses said to "Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in "them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glo- "rified."

'A man that is praying (saith Bernard) should behave himself as 'if he were entering into the court of heaven, where he sees the 'Lord upon his throne, surrounded with ten thousand of his angels 'and saints ministering unto him.' When thou comest from a duty in which thy heart hath been toying and wandering, thou mayest say, Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppose all the impertinencies and vanities which have past through thine heart in

duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldest thou have the face to present to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? Why thy thoughts are vocal to God, Psal. cxxxix. 2. If thou wert petitioning the king for thy life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy bandstrings, or catching at every fly that lights upon thy clothes, whilst thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think sadly upon that scripture, Psalm lxxxvii. 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his "saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round "about him?" Why did God ascend in thunderings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Sinai? Exod. xix. 16—18. Why did the mountains smoke under him? The people quake and tremble round about him, yea, Moses himself not exempted? but to teach the people, that great truth, Heb. xii. 28, 29. "Let us have grace "whereby we may serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly "fear, for our God is a consuming fire!" Present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious frame.

Help 5. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty.* What is the reason our hearts are so dull, careless and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our communion with God; by reason whereof the heart is out of a praying frame? If that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and serious with God.

To this purpose those intermediate ejaculations betwixt stated and solemn duties, are of most sweet and excellent use; by these one duty is as it were linked to another, and so the soul, as it were, wraps up itself in a chain of duties. That Christian seldom misses his mark in solemn duty, that shoots up many of these darts in the intervals of duty. It is an excellent commendation Christ bestows upon the spouse, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-"comb." Upon which text one gives this sweet note; The honeycomb drops actually but sometimes, but it always hangs full of sweet drops ready to fall; If our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

Help 6. *Endeavour to engage and raise thy affections to God in duty, if thou wouldest have thy distractions cured.*

A dropping eye, and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others are upon this account: When the soul is intent upon any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent: the affections command the thoughts to go after them; deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness; Could you but look upon duties as the galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your souls

may be filled with those ravishing and matchless delights that are in his presence, your soul would not offer to stir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty as it is with those that dig for golden ore; they try here, and finding none, try there; and so go from place to place, till at last they hit upon the rich vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and constancy. "O how I "love thy law, it is my meditation day and night!" Psal. cxix. 97. The soul could dwell day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and desires are engaged. What is the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties! Why are you ready to be gone, almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God, but because your affections are not engaged?

Help 7. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from heaven, when vain thoughts assault thy heart in duty.*

When the messenger of Satan buffeted Paul by wicked injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. never slight wandering thoughts in duty as small matters: follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, turning thee to God with such words as these: Lord, I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busy devil and a vain heart conspiring together have set upon me. O my God! what an heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without distraction! when shall I enjoy an hour of free communion with thee? Help me, my God, this once; do but display thy glory before mine eye, and my heart shall quickly be recovered; Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go away without thee? See how the heart of thy poor child works towards thee! strives to get near thee, but cannot: My heart is aground, "come "thou north-wind, blow south-wind," O for a fresh gale now from thy Spirit, to set my affections a-float! Couldst thou but thus affectionately bewail thy distractions to God, thou mightest obtain help and deliverance from them: He would say to Satan and thine imperious lusts, as Ahasuerus said of Haman, What, will he force the queen before my face? Who are these that set upon my child in my work and presence?

Help 8. *Look upon the success and sweetness of thy duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart close with God in them.*

These two things, the success and sweetness of duty, are as dear to a Christian as his two eyes; and both of these must necessarily be lost, if the heart be lost in duty. Job xxxv. 13. "Surely God hear- "eth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it." The promise is made to an heart engaged, Jer. xxix. 13. "Then shall ye seek "me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts." Well then, when thou findest thy heart under the power of deadness and distraction, say to thy soul, O what do I lose by a careless heart now! my praying times are the choicest parts, the golden spots

of all my time: Could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain such mercies as would be matter for a song to all eternity.

Help 9. *Look upon it as a great discovery of the sincerity or hypocrisy of your hearts, according as you find them careful or careless in this matter.*

Nothing will startle an upright heart more than this: What, shall I give way to a customary wandering of heart from God? Shall the spot of the hypocrite appear upon my soul? They indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. but shall I do so? When men come into the presence-chamber, and the king is not there, they bow to the empty chair. O never let me be satisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty "until mine eyes have seen the King, the "Lord of hosts."

Help 10. Lastly, *It will be of special use to keep thine heart with God in duties, to consider what influence all thy duties have into thy eternity.*

These are your seed-times, and what you sow in your duties in this world, you must look to reap the fruits of it in another world, Gal. vi. 7, 8. If you sow to the flesh, of that you shall reap corruption; but if to the Spirit, life everlasting. O my soul, answer seriously, wouldst thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity in the world to come? Darest thou say, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the earth in duty, when thou scarce mindest what thou sayest or hearest; now, Lord, I am sowing to the Spirit; now I am providing and laying up for eternity; now I am seeking for glory, honour, and immortality; now I am striving to enter in at the strait gate; now I am taking the kingdom of heaven by an holy violence? O such a consideration as this should make the multitudes of vain thoughts that press in upon the heart in duty, to fly seven ways before it. And thus I have shewn you how to keep your hearts in the times of duty.

Season 7. 'The seventh season calling for more than common dili-'gence to keep the heart, is, when we receive injuries and abuses 'from men. Such is the depravedness and corruption of man in his 'collapsed state, that *homo homini lupus*, one man is become a *wolf*, a '*tyger*, to another: They are, as the prophet complains, Hab. i. 14. '"As the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping things, that have no 'ruler over them;" and as wicked men are cruel and oppressive one 'to another, so they conspire together to abuse and wrong the peo-'ple of God, as the same prophet complains, ver. 13. "The wicked 'devoureth the man that is more righteous than he." Now when 'we are thus abused and wronged, it is hard to keep the heart from 'revengeful motions: to make it meekly and quietly to commit the 'cause to him that judgeth righteously; to exercise no other affec-'tion but pity towards them that abuse us. Surely the spirit that is 'in us lusteth to revenge, but it must not be so; you have choice 'helps in the gospel to keep down your hearts from such sinful mo-

'tions against your enemies, and to sweeten your embittered spirits.' The seventh case then shall be this,

Case 7. *How a Christian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greatest injuries and abuses from men.*

The gospel, indeed, allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and assert our rights, but not to vent our corruptions, and invade God's right. When therefore thou findest thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful motions, presently apply the following remedies; and the first is this,

Remedy 1. *Urge upon thy heart the severe prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleasant and luscious soever it be to our vitiated appetites. O, saith nature, revenge is sweet: O but, saith God, the effects thereof shall be bitter. How plainly hath God interdicted this flesh-pleasing sin, Prov. xx. 22. "Say not I will recompense evil." Prov. xxiv. 29. "Say not I will "do so to him as he hath done to me." Rom. xii. 17. "Recom- "pence to no man evil for evil." And ver. 19. "Avenge not your- "selves, but rather give place to wrath." Nay, that is not all; but Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, "give him drink." The word *feed him*, as critics observe, signifies to feed cheerfully, and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquillity of human society, which can never be preserved if revenge be not deposed. It was wont to be an argument urged by the Christians to prove their religion to be supernatural and pure that forbids revenge, which is so sweet to nature; and verily it is a thousand pities such an argument should be lost. Well, then, awe your hearts with the authority of God in these scriptures, and when carnal reason saith, mine enemy deserves to be hated, let conscience reply, but doth God deserve to be disobeyed? Thus and thus hath he done, and so he hath wronged me; but what hath God done that I should wrong him? If he dare be so bold to break the peace, shall I be so wicked to break the precept? If he fears not to wrong me, shall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of God's threatenings repress such sinful motions.

Remedy 2. *Set before your eyes the most eminent patterns of meekness and forgiveness, that your souls may fall in love with them.* This is the way to cut off those common pleas of the flesh for revenge: As thus no man would bear such an affront: Yes, such and such have borne as bad and worse. I shall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I pass by this: No matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wisest and holiest of men; never did any suffer more and greater abuses from men than Christ did, and never did any carry it more peaceably and forgivingly, Isa. liii. 7. "He was oppressed, and he "was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a "lamb to the slaughter," &c. This pattern of our Lord the apostle sets before you for your imitation, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. "For even "hereunto are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leav-

" ing us an example that we should follow his steps: Who when he " was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened " not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." To be of a meek, forgiving spirit, is Christ-like, God-like; "then shall " you be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he " maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and send- " eth rain on the just and unjust," Matth. v. 45. How eminently also did the Spirit of Christ rest upon his apostles? Never were there such men upon earth for true excellency of spirit. None were ever abused more, or suffered their abuses better. " Being reviled (say " they) we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, " we entreat," 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. Mr. Calvin, though a man of a quick spirit, yet had attained such a degree of this Christ-like forgiveness, that when Luther had used some opprobrious language of him, the good man said no more but this, 'Although he should call me 'devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent servant of 'Jesus Christ.'

I have often heard it reported of holy Mr. Dod, that when one, enraged at his close, convincing doctrine, picked a quarrel with him, smote him on the face, and dashed out two of his teeth; this meek servant of Christ spit out the teeth and blood into his hand, and said, See, here, you have knocked out two of my teeth, and that without any just provocation; but on condition I might do your soul good, I would give you leave to dash out all the rest. Here is the excellency of a Christian's spirit, above all the attainments of moral heathens: Though they were excellent in many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving spirit. It is the first office of justice, said Tully, to hurt no body, unless first provoked by an injury; whereupon Lactantius, *O quam simplicem veramque sententiam, duorum verberam adjectione, corrupit!* What a dainty sentence spoiled the orator, by adding those two last words! Strive then for this excellency of spirit, which is the proper excellency of Christians; do some singular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a testimony in their consciences. When Moses out-did the *magicians*, they were forced to confess the finger of God in that business.

Remedy 3. *Consider well the quality of the person that hath wronged thee:* either he is a good man, or a wicked man, that hath done thee the injury: If he be a good man, there is light and tenderness in his conscience, and that will bring him at last to a sense of the evil he hath done; however, Christ hath forgiven him greater injuries than these, and why shouldst not thou? Will Christ not upbraid him with any of those wrongs done to him, but frankly forgive them all; and wilt thou take him by the throat for some petty abuse that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? If so, truly you have more need to exercise pity, than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: For, (1.) He is beside himself, so indeed is every unconverted sinner,

Luke xv. 17. Should you go into Bedlam, and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you; would you say I will be revenged upon them? No, you would rather go away pitying them! Alas, poor creatures! they are out of their wits, and know not what they do. Besides,

(2.) There is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more misery than you can find in your hearts to wish them; you need not study to revenge, God's vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? Have they not an eternity of misery coming? If they repent not, this must be the portion of their cup; and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

Remedy 4. *Keep down thy heart by this consideration, that by revenge thou canst but satisfy a lust, but by forgiveness thou shalt conquer a lust.*

Suppose by revenge thou shouldst destroy one enemy, I will shew thee how, by forgiving, thou shalt conquer three, thine own lust, the devil's temptation, and thine enemy's heart; and is not this a more glorious conquest? If by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as Bernard saith) *Infelix victoria, ubi superans virum secumbit vitio:* Unhappy victory, when, by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruption. But this way you may obtain a glorious conquest indeed. What an honourable and dry victory, did David this way obtain over Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking "these words, that Saul lifted up his voice, and wept; and he said "to David, thou art more righteous than I."

It must be a very disingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work; a stony heart, which this fire will not melt. To this sense is that, Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine "enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so "doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." Some will have it a sin-punishing fire, but others a heart-melting fie. To be sure it will either melt his heart, or aggravate his misery. Augustine thinks that Stephen's prayer for his enemies was the great means of Paul's conversion.

Remedy 5. *Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrongs and injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon yourselves: O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such troubles! O that my spirit should be so unlike to Christ's! The patience and meekness of other Christians, have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones; the spirits of others have been raised in blessing God, when they have been loaded with reproaches from the world, they have bound them as an ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said Luther) *quod video nomen pessimum mihi crescere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a

bad name among wicked men. To the same purpose Jerom said sweetly, *Gratia ago Deo meo quod dignus sum quem mundus orderit;* I thank my God that I am worthy to be hated of the world. Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnify God, and bless him for them; if it work contrary with me, I have cause enough to be filled with self-displeasancy.

If you have got any good by them; if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you search your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you, has made you see how you have wronged God, then let me say for them, as Paul did himself, Pray forgive them this wrong.

What! can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been instrumental of so much good to you! That is strange! what though they meant it for evil? yet if God hath turned it to good, you have no more reason to rage against the instrument than he had who received a wound from his enemy which only brake, and let out that imposthume which otherwise had been his death.

Remedy 6. *It is of excellent use to keep the heart from revenge, to look up, and eye the first cause by which all our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our spirits quickly: never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a saint, more than David's was tried by that railing Shimei; yet the spirit of this good man was not at all poisoned with revenge, though he goes along cursing, and casting stones at him, all the way. Yea, though Abishai offered David, if he pleased, the head of that enemy; yet the king said, "What "have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, be- "cause the Lord hath said unto him, curse David: who then shall "say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" It may be, God uses him as his rod, to lash me, because I, by my sin, made his enemies to blaspheme him; and shall I be angry with the rod? How irrational were that? This also was it that quieted Job; he doth not rail, and vow revenge upon the Chaldeans and Sabeans, but eyes God as the orderer of those troubles, and is quiet; "The Lord hath "taken away, blessed be his name," Job i. 21.

Objection. But you will say, *To turn aside the right of a man, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not,* Lam. iii. 36.

Answer. True: but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet submission in that; nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all those troubles. Did we see more of an holy God, we should shew less of a corrupt nature in such trials.

Remedy 7. *Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily inflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving, and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you; and will you be so quick in avenging yourselves upon others? O what a sharp and terrible rebuke is that! Mat. xviii. 32, 33. "O thou wicked and

" slothful servant! I forgave thee all that debt because thou desirest " me, shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow " servant, even as I had pity on thee?" None should be so filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to such as wrong them, as those should be that have experienced the riches of mercy themselves: methinks the mercy of God to us should melt our very bowels into mercy over others; it is impossible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us. Those that have found mercy, should shew mercy: if kindness cannot work, methinks fear should. " If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither " will your Father forgive you your trespasses," Mat. vi. 15.

Remedy 8. Lastly, *Let the consideration of the day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, withhold your hands from anticipating it by acts of revenge.*

Why are you so quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abused servants? " Be patient therefore, my brethren, unto the " coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth, &c. Be " ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: Grudge " not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned. Be- " hold the Judge standeth at the door," Jam. v. 7, 8, 9. This text affords three arguments against revenge: (1.) The Lord's near approach. (2.) The example of the husbandman's patience. (3.) The danger we draw upon ourselves by anticipating God's judgment; *Vengeance is mine*, saith the Lord; he will distribute justice more equally, and impartially, than you can: they who believe they have a God to right them, will not so much wrong themselves, as avenge their own wrongs.

Objection 1. *But flesh and blood are not able to bear such abuses.*

Solution. If you resolve to consult flesh and blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to religion: Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

Object. 2. *But if I put up such abuses, I shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.*

Sol. (1.) You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your spirits. (2.) It must be a base spirit indeed that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian: and thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge under all provocations.

Season 8. ' The next season in which we are in danger of losing our ' hearts is, when we meet with great crosses and provocations; then ' sinful passion is apt to transport the heart. It is the fault of many ' good men to be of hasty and quick spirits, when provoked, though ' they dare not concoct anger into malice; for that would be a note ' of wickedness: yet are they very incident to sudden anger, which ' is a sign of weakness." * Beza, in the life of Calvin, observes,

* Bez. in Vit. Cal. p. 100.

'that he was of a keen and hasty spirit;' and he that writes the life of the great Cameron, * saith, 'that his anger was soon stirred to-'wards his near and familiar friends, but then he would easily de-'pose it and acknowledge his weakness.' Alas! when provocations and trials of our patience come, we know not what spirit we are of. The eighth case therefore is this,

Case 8. *How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great crosses and provocations.*

There are three sorts of anger, *natural*, *holy*, and *sinful* anger. (1.) *Natural*, which is nothing else but the motion of the irascible appetive towards an offensive object; and this in itself is no sin, they are propassions, rather than passions; the infelicities, rather than the sins of nature, as Jerom calls them. Reason, saith Plutarch, is the *driver*, the soul is the *chariot*, and the two horses that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiscible and irascible appetites; whilst these are rightly managed by reason, they are not only lawful, but very useful to the soul. God would not have us to be stupid and insensate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In Eph. i. 26. he allows the natural motion, but forbids the sinful exorbitancy. (2.) Holy anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly spark of love to God, and in scripture is called *zeal*, which is, as one saith, the dagger which love draws in God's quarrel. Such was Lot's against the Sodomites, and that of Moses against the idolatrous Israelites. When Servetus condemned Zuinglius for his harshness, his answer was, *In aliis mansuetus ero, in blasphemiis in Christum, non ita;* In other cases I will be mild, but in the cause of Christ not so. That which the world calls moderation and mildness here, is in God's account stupidity and cowardliness; neither of these are that which I am now persuading you to keep your hearts against. But, (3.) There is a sinful passion, that is the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes sinful when it is either *causeless*, Mat. v. 22. or *excessive;* and that either in measure or time, exceeding the value of the impulsive cause, be it more transient or abiding; yet it is a sin, and it is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations, are these:

Means 1. *Get low and humble thoughts of yourselves, and then you will have meek spirits, and peaceable deportments towards others.*

The humble is ever the patient man; pride is the root of passion; a lofty will be a surly spirit; bladders blown up with wind, will not lie close together; but prick them, and you may pack a thousand in a little room: "Only by pride cometh contention," Prov. xiii. 10. When we over-rate ourselves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes; and here, by the way, take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekening and calming of your spirits. Christian, methinks thou wouldst

* Icon Cameronis.

know so much of thyself, that it is impossible any should lay thee lower, or have baser thoughts of thee than thou hast of thyself. Some render the original of that text, Hab. ii. 5. thus: "The proud "man is as he that transgresseth by wine;" and drunkards, you know, are quarrelsome. O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

Means 2. *Be often sweetening your spirits in communion with God, and they will not easily be imbittered with wrath towards men.*

A quiet *conscience* never produced an unquiet *conversation:* the peace of God doth βραβευειν, rule in the heart, as an umpire appeasing strifes; for so much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports. Wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that dove-like spirit which loves a sedate and quiet breast. O! saith the soul that feeds upon the sweet communion of the Spirit, shall the sparks of provocations now catch in my passions, and raise such a smoke in my soul, as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is so effectual a remedy against passion, that I durst almost venture, in a Christian of a hasty nature, to make long-suffering a sign of communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under provocations, it is very like his soul feeds upon such sweetness in God as he is loth to leave; and on the other side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamorous, doubtless, all is not well within; his spirit is like a bone out of joint, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

Means 3. *Get due apprehensions of the evil nature and effects of sinful anger:* Ira furor brevis; *anger is a short madness, (saith one;)* Ira animæ febris *(saith another;) anger is the fever of the soul; It is the* interregnum and eclipse of reason, *(saith a third).*

The effects of it are also very sad.

(1.) "It grieves the Spirit of God," Eph. iv. 30. banishes him from that breast in which it rages and tumultuates: God is the God of peace; the presence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm. It is a golden note one gives upon the forecited text, God doth not usually bless with peace of conscience, such as make no conscience of peace. (2.) It gives advantage to the devil, Eph. iv. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented spirit, and finds no rest but in restless hearts? he lives like the *salamander*, in fires of contention; he bestirs himself when the spirits are in a commotion; sometimes he fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, sometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with indecent language; even a meek Moses sometimes speaks unadvisedly with his lips. (3.) It dis-tunes the spirit for duty; upon this account the apostle dissuades husbands and wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. All acts of worship must be suitable to the object of worship; but God is the God of peace, the God of love.

(4.) To mention no more, it disparages the Christian religion. How would Plato and Pythagoras shame us, if they were now living? Christ was a lamb for meekness, and doth it become his followers to be like lions? O keep your hearts, or you will at once lose not only your own peace, but the credit of religion.

Means 4. *Consider how sweet a thing it is to a Christian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the spoils of them.*

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that "ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32. Is there any content in venting a passion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comest in a calm mood, or upon a death-bed to review thy life, how comfortable then will it be to reflect upon the conquests thou hast got by the fear of God, over the evil propensions of thine own heart! It was a memorable saying of Valentinian the emperor when he came to die: 'Amongst all my conquests (said he) 'there is but one that now comforts me; and being asked what that 'was, he answered, I have overcome my worst enemy, mine own 'naughty heart.'

Means 5. *Shame yourselves by setting before you those eminent patterns that have been most excellent for meekness.*

Above all, compare your spirits with the Spirit of Christ: "Learn "of me (saith he,) for I am meek and lowly," Mat. xi. 29. Christ was meek and lowly, but I am proud and passionate; it was the high commendation of Moses, Num. xii. 3. "Now the man Moses was "meek above all the men of the earth: and this was the man that "knew God to face." It is said of Calvin and Ursin, that they both were of choleric natures, but yet had so learned the meekness of Christ as not to utter one word, under the greatest provocation, unbeseeming religion. When I read the pretty stories of the very heathens that never had the advantages that we have, how the Pythagoreans, whatever feuds had been among them in the day, would hush all by sending to each other this message, *The sun is almost set;* and that of Plato to his scholar, *I would beat thee if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderness Lycurgus shewed to an insolent fellow that had struck out one of his eyes, I am ashamed to see how much Christians are out-shot by heathens; who, by mere moral arguments and precepts, had thus meekened their spirits, and conquered their passions. The dim light of nature could teach Seneca to say, That anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence, but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. It is a shame that these men who came so far behind us in means and advantages, should so far out-strip us in meekness and patience.

Means 6. Lastly, *Avoid all irritating occasions.*

He that will not hear the clapper, must not pull the rope: "Grie-"vous words stir up anger," saith Solomon, Prov. xvi. 1. Do not only pray, and resolve against it, but get as far as you can out of the

way of it, it is true spiritual valour, to run as fast, and as far as we can, out of sin's way: If you can but avoid anger in its first rise, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this sin as it is with other sins; other sins grow to their full strength by degrees, their first motions are the weakest; but this sin is born in its full strength, it is strongest at first; withstand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations arise.

Season 9. The ninth season of exerting our greatest diligence, 'Is, 'the critical hour of temptation, wherein Satan lays close siege to the 'fort-royal of a Christian's heart, and often surprizes it for want of 'watchfulness: to keep the heart now, is no less a mercy than a duty; 'few Christians are so well skilled in detecting the fallacies, and 'retorting the arguments by which Satan uses to draw them to sin, as 'to come off safe in those encounters. "Watch and pray (saith '"our Lord) lest ye enter into temptation," Mark xiv. 38.' Even an eminent David, and a wise Solomon, have smarted for their carelessness, at such a time as this. The ninth case therefore shall be this,

Case 9. *How a Christian, when strongly solicited by the devil to sin, may keep his heart from yielding to the temptation.*

Now there are six special arguments by which Satan subtilly insinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which I shall offer thee some help for the keeping of thy heart; and the first is this:

Argument 1. The first argument is drawn from the pleasure of sin: O (saith Satan) here is pleasure to be enjoyed: the temptation comes with a smiling countenance, and charming voice: what, art thou so phlegmatic and dull a soul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleasure? Who can with-hold himself from such delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this argument of pleasure upon the tempter; which is done two ways.

1. Thou tellest me, Satan, that sin is pleasant; be it so: But are the gripes of conscience, and the flames of hell so too? Is it pleasant to feel the wounds and throbs of conscience? If so, why did Peter weep so bitterly? Mat. xxvi. 75. Why did David cry out of broken bones? Psal. li. I hear what thou sayest of the pleasure of sin, and I have read what David hath said of the terrible effects of sin in his Psalm to bring to remembrance, Psal. xxxviii. ver. 2. "Thine "arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore:" ver. 3. "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither "is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin: ver. 4. "For "mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; they "are too heavy for me:" ver. 5. "My wounds stink, and are cor-"rupt, because of my foolishness:" ver. 6. "I am troubled, I am "bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long:" ver. 7. "My loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no sound-"ness in my flesh," ver. 8. "I am feeble and sore broken, I have "roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart."

Here I see the true face of sin; if I yield to thy temptation, I must either feel these pangs of conscience, or the flames of hell.

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when, by experience, I know there is more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin? O how sweet is it to please God, to obey conscience, to preserve inward peace! To be able to say, in this trial, I have discovered the sincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any such delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

Arg. 2. The second argument is drawn from the secresy of sin. O (saith Satan) this sin will never disgrace thee abroad, none shall know it.

This argument may be retorted, and the heart secured thus: thou sayest, none shall know it; but, Satan, canst thou find a place void of the divine presence for me to sin in? Thus Job secured his heart from this temptation, Job xiii. 4. "Doth he not see my ways, and "count all my steps?" Therefore he makes a covenant with his eyes, ver. 1. After the same manner Solomon teacheth us to retort this temptation, Prov. v. 20, 21. "And why my son wilt thou be "ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stran-"ger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and "he pondereth all his goings." What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the present? I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the world shall know it too; for the word assures me, Luke viii. 17. "That what now is done in secret, shall "be proclaimed as upon the house top." Besides, is not my conscience as a thousand witnesses! Do I owe no reverence to myself? Could the heathen man say, *Turpe quid ausurus, te fine, teste time;* When thou art tempted to commit sin, fear thyself without any other witness: And shall not I be afraid to sin before mine own conscience, which always hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my most secret actions?

Arg. 3. The third argument by which Satan tempteth to sin is taken from the gain and profit arising out of it; why so nice and scrupulous? it is but to stretch the conscience a little, and thou mayest make thyself: now is thy opportunity!

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous snare by retorting the temptation thus: But what a profit will it be, if a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world? There is an immortal spirit dwelling in this earthly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which must live to all eternity when this world shall lie in white ashes. A soul for which Jesus Christ shed his precious and invaluable blood. I was sent into this world to provide for this soul; indeed God hath also committed to me the care of my body, but, (as * one happily ex-

* Gospel-Glass, p. 5.

presses it) with this difference: a master commits two things to a servant—the child, and the child's clothes; will the master thank the servant, if he plead, I have kept the clothes, but I have neglected the life of the child?

Arg. 4. The fourth argument is drawn from the smallness of the sin; it is but a little one, a small matter, a trifle; who would stand upon such niceties?

This argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the majesty of heaven a little one too? If I commit this sin, I must offend and wrong a great God, Isa. xl. 15, 16, 17,—22.

2. Is there any little hell to torment little sinners in? Are not the least sinners there filled with the fulness of wrath? O there is great wrath treasured up for such as the world counts little sinners.

3. The less the sin, the less the inducement to commit it: What, shall I break with God for a trifle? Destroy my peace, wound my conscience, grieve the spirit, and all this for nothing? O what madness is this!

Arg. 5. A fifth argument is drawn from the grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extreme to mark it;

But stay, my heart;

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners? Indeed for involuntary surprisal, unavoidable and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of course; but where is the promise to a daring sinnner that sins upon presumption of pardon? Pause a while, my soul, upon that scripture, Numb. xv. 27—30. "And if a soul "sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first "year for a sin-offering, &c. But the soul that doth ought presump- "tuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be "cut off from among his people."

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, how can I abuse so good a God? shall I take so glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin? Shall I wrong him because he is good? Or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. "There is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared," Psal. cxxx. 4.

Arg. 6. *Lastly*, Sometimes Satan encourages to sin from the examples of good and holy men; thus and thus they have sinned and been restored, therefore this may consist with grace, and thou be saved nevertheless. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart secured, by retorting the argument these three ways:

1. Though good men may commit the same sin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to sin upon such a ground and encouragement as this?

2. Did God record these examples for my imitation, or for my warning? Are they not set up as sea-marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they split? 1 Cor. x. 6. "Now these were our

"examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, "as they also lusted."

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for sin? O, I dare not follow them in the ways of sin! *quia me vestiga terrent;* Lest God should plunge me into the deeps of horror, into which he cast them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to sin.

Season 10. "The tenth special season to keep the heart with all 'diligence, is the time of spiritual darkness and doubting, when it is 'with the soul as it was with Paul in his dangerous voyage, neither 'sun, nor moon, nor star appears for many days: When by reason 'of the hidings of God's face, the prevalency of corruption, and the 'inevidence of grace, the soul is even ready to give up all its hopes 'and comforts for lost; to draw sad and desperate conclusions upon 'itself; to call its former comforts vain delusions; its grace hypo-'crisy. When the serene and clear heavens are overcast with dark 'clouds, yea, filled with thunders and horrible tempests, when the 'poor pensive soul sits down and weeps forth this sad lamentation, '"My hope is perished from the Lord!" Now to keep the heart 'from sinking in such a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own 'sincerity, is a matter of great difficulty. The tenth case then will 'be this:'

Case 10. *How the people of God, in dark and doubting seasons, may keep their hearts from entertaining such sad conclusions about their estates, as destroy their peace, and unfit them for their duty.*

There are two general heads to which the grounds of doubting our sincerity may be reduced. (1.) God's carriage towards the soul, either in the time of some extraordinary affliction, or of some long and sad desertion. Or, (2.) The soul's carriage towards God: And here it usually argues against the truth of its own graces, either (1.) From its relapses into the same sins from which it had formerly risen with shame and sorrow. Or, (2.) From the sensible declining of its affections from God. Or, (3.) From the excess of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4.) From its enlargements in public, and often straitenings in private duties. Or, (5.) From some horrid injections of Satan, with which the soul is greatly perplexed. Or, lastly, From God's silence and seeming denial of its long depending suits and prayers.

These are the common grounds of those sad conclusions: Now in order to the establishment and support of the heart in this condition, it will be necessary,

1. That you be acquainted with some general truths, which have a tendency to the settlement of a trembling and doubting soul.

2. That you be rightly instructed about the forementioned particulars, which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requisite for poor doubting souls to be acquainted with, are these:

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocrisy doth not presently prove the person in whom it is, to be an hypocrite.* You must carefully distinguish between the *presence* and *predominancy* of hypocrisy: There are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts; David and Peter had sad experience of it; yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright, it did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us as against us:* It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over-rigid, and merciless severity against themselves: They do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls: It is in this case, as Solomon speaks in another, Prov. xii. 7. "There is that maketh himself "rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, "and yet hath great riches." It is the damning sin of the self-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is: And it is the sin and folly of some upright ones, to make their condition worse than indeed it is. Why should you be such enemies to your own peace? To read over the evidences of God's love to your souls, as a man doth a book which he intends to confute? Why do you study to find evasions, to turn off those comforts which are due to you? It is said of Joseph, that he was minded to put away his espoused Mary, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the Holy Ghost: And this may be your case. And a third truth is this:

3. *That many a saint hath charged and condemned himself for that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* "Why "hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear," (saith the church) Isa. lxiii. 17. and yet the verse before manifests, that their hearts were not so hardened: Godly Bradford wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; yet doubtless God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity.* There are many more things to trouble you, than there are to stumble you: If upon every slip and failing through infirmity, you should question all that ever was wrought upon you, your life must be made up of doubtings and fears: You can never attain a settled peace, nor live that life of praise and thankfulness, the gospel calls for.

5. *The soul is not at all times fit to pass judgment upon its own condition:* To be sure in the dark day of desertion, when the soul is benighted; and in the stormy day of temptation, when the soul is in a hurry, it is utterly unfit to judge its estate; "Examine your hearts "upon your beds, and be still," Psal. iv. This is rather a season for watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of covenant with God.* The wife hath many weaknesses and failings, often grieves and displeases her husband; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him: These failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. "Return, O "backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you."

7. Lastly, *Whatever our sin, or trouble be, it should rather drive us to God, than from God.* "Pardon my sin for it is great," Psal. xxv. 11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted: Yet it is a false inference, that therefore thou shouldest be discouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digested these seven establishing truths, if still the doubt remain, then consider what may be replied to the particular grounds of these doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no regard or love for your souls, because of some extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: But I would not have thy soul so to conclude, till thou be able satisfactorily to answer these three questions.

Question 1. If great troubles and afflictions be marks of God's hatred, why should not impunity and constant prosperity be tokens of his love? For *contrariorum contraria est ratio & consequentia?* of contrary things, there is a contrary reason and consequence: But is this so indeed? or saith not the scripture quite otherwise? Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools destroys them." So Psal. xxxvii. 5.

Quest. 2. Dare I draw the same conclusion upon all others that have been as much, yea, more afflicted than myself? If this argument conclude against thee, then so it doth against every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction of any child of God hath been, the more strongly the argument still concludes: And then woe to David, Job, Heman, Paul, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

Quest. 3. Had God exempted you only from those troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? Especially since the scripture saith, Heb. xii. 8. "If ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Oh, how is our Father put to it by froward children! If he afflicts, then one cries, he loves me not: If he exempt from afflictions, others question his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do, under the rod, than this.

2. Or do you rashly infer, the Lord hath no love for you, because he hides his face from you; that your condition is miserable, because dark and uncomfortable? Before you draw such rash conclusions, see what answer you can give to these four following queries.

Query 1. *If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as a harsh and severe construction, why should not his people interpret it in the best sense?* And is not this such? May he not have a design of love, as well as of hatred, in this dispensation? May he not depart for a season, and not for ever? Yea, that he might not depart for ever. You are not the first that have mistaken God's ends in desertion. Isa. xlix. 14. "Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me:"

Was it so indeed? Nothing less. Ver. 15. "Can a mother for-"get," &c.

Query 2. *Do you find the marks of an absolute, total and final desertion upon your own spirits, that you are so apt to conclude yours to be such?* Do you find your hearts inclined to forsake God? Have you lost your conscientious tenderness in point of sin? If so, sad characters appear upon you indeed; but if in this dark hour you are as tender of sin as ever, as much resolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forsake God, let him do what he will with me: O no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited, and temporary desertion; by this he still keeps his interest in your hearts, a sure sign he will return, and visit you again.

Query 3. *Is sense and feeling a competent judge of God's actions and designs?* Or may a man safely rely upon its testimony, after so many discoveries of the infallibility of it? Is this a sound argument? If God had any love for my soul, if it were not quite gone, I should feel it now, as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do you not know the sun still keeps on his course in the heavens, even in dull and close weather, when you cannot see it? And may it not be so with the love of God? Read Isa. l. 10. May not I as well conclude in winter, when the flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, because I cannot find them in December where I saw them in May?

Query 4. Think you the Lord cares not to break his children's hearts, and his own promise too? Hath he no more regard to either? If he return no more, these must be the consequents, Isa. lvii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 5.

Well, then, from God's carriage towards you, either in affliction, or desertion, no such discouraging, heart-sinking conclusions can be inferred. Next, let us see whether they may not be inferred from our carriage towards God; and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these;

1. I have fallen again into the same sin from which I have formerly risen with repentance and resolution; therefore my sinning is customary sinning; a spot that is not the spot of God's children. Hence the upright soul trembles; upon this it is ready to affirm, that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisy. But stay, poor trembling heart.

Query 1. *If this be so, how comes it to pass that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it?* Mat. xxvi. 40, 41. and how is it that we find in scripture so many promises made to God's people, not only upon their first sins, but upon their backslidings also? Jer. iii. 22. Hos. xiv. 4.

Query 2. *Is not your repentance and care renewed as often as your guilt is renewed?* Yea, the oftener you sin, the more you are trou-

bled; it is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof * Bernard excellently discovers. 1. (Saith he) When a man accustomed to good, sinneth grievously, it seems insupportable, yea, he seems to descend alive into hell. 2. In process of time it seems not insupportable, but heavy: and betwixt insupportable and heavy, there is no small descent.

3. Next it becomes light, his conscience smites but faintly, and he feels not the stripes of it. 4. Then there is not only a total insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing is now become sweet and pleasing, in some degree. 5. Then it is turned into custom, and not only pleases, but daily pleases. Lastly, Custom is turned into nature; he cannot be pulled away from it, but defends and pleads for it: This is customary sinning, this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is your condition.

Query 3. *Are you sure, from scripture-grounds, that good men may not relapse again and again into the same sin?* It is true, as for gross sins, they do not use to relapse into them: David committed adultery no more: Paul persecuted the church no more: Peter denied Christ no more: But I speak of ordinary infirmities. Job's friends were good men, yet (saith he) chap. xix. 3. "These "ten times have ye reproached me." So then, no such conclusions follow from this first ground of doubting.

2. *The second ground is the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things?* O! (saith the upright soul) if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green olive tree in the house of my God; but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay,

Query 1. *May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections?* What if they are not so quick and ravishing as at first, may not that be recompensed in the spirituality and solidity of them now? Phil. i. 9. "I pray God your love may "abound more and more in all judgment:" It may be more *solid*, though not so *fervent*; or do not you mistake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? It is a good note of Ames, we discern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather *Crevisse quam crescere*, to *have* grown, than to grow.

Query 2. *But grant it be so indeed, as you affirm, must it needs follow, that the root of the matter is not in you?* David's last ways are distinguished from his first, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. and yet both first and last a holy man. The church of Ephesus is charged by Christ for leaving her first love, and yet a golden candlestick, many precious saints in that church, Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions is, the excess of your affections to some creature-enjoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God; and if so, my love is but hypocritical: I sometimes

* *Lib. de Consc. p.* 109.

feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to earthly comforts, than I do to heavenly objects, therefore my soul is not upright in me. But stay, O soul,

Query 1. *May not a man love God more solidly, and strongly, than the creature, and yet his affections to the creature be sometimes moved more violently, and sensibly, than towards God?* As rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, than a sudden, though more violent passion: So we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it, now and then, but by the depth of the root, and constancy of its actings. Because David was so passionately moved for Absalom, Joab concludes, that if he had lived, and all the people died, "it "would have pleased him well," 2 Sam. xix. 7. But that was argued more like a soldier, than a logician.

Query 2. *If you indeed love the creature for itself, if you make it your end, and religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you.* But if you love the creature in reference to God, and see nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excess; this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately, *(i. e.)* to put it in God's room, and make it a man's end; this is the love of a carnal heart; to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it than we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

Query 3. *Have not many souls feared, as you do, that when Christ and creatures shall stand as competitors in some eminent trial, they should forsake Christ rather than the creature; and yet when brought to that dilemma, have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ?* Many of the martyrs had such fears, and they were satisfied; the prevalency of love is best seen at parting; there may be more love to Christ in thy soul, than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch, thou mayest see it.

4. A fourth ground of these sad conclusions, is from hence, that we find our hearts sometimes more straitened in private, than in public duties. O! if my soul were sincere, its actings in duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a Pharisee upon this ground. It is sad, indeed, we should at any time find our hearts straitened in private. But,

Query 1. *Do not all thine enlargements in duty, whether public, or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences; and according as he gives out, or holds back those influences, so art thou enlarged, or straitened?* And what if sometimes he pleases to give that in a public, which he withholds in a private duty, as long as thy soul is satisfied in neither, without communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden? Doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

Query 2. *Dost thou not make conscience of private duties, and set thyself as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them; if thou art *curious*

about public, and *careless* about private duties, that would be a sad sign: but when you have conscientiously performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow that you are insincere, because that communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides,

Query 3. *May there not be something, at sometimes, in a public, which is wanting in a private duty, to raise and advantage thine affections?* God may sometimes make use of the melting affections of them with whom thou hearest, or prayest, as petty instruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the case so standing) no such inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from those horrid injections of Satan with which the soul is greatly perplexed; by these I may see what an heart I have: Can grace be where those are?

Yes, grace may be where such thoughts are, though not where they are lodged, and consented to. Dost thou cry out under the burden? Enter thy protest in heaven against them, strive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God; then it is *violence*, not a voluntary *prostitution*.

6. The last ground of these sad conclusions, is the Lord's long silence, and seeming denial of our long depending suits, and prayers. O if God had any regard to my soul, he would have heard my cries before now! But I have no answer from him, therefore no interest in him. But stay, doubting soul,

Query 1. *Have not many saints stumbled upon this stone, before thee?* Psal. xxxi. 22. "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before "thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplica-"tion." So the church, Lam. iii. 44. "Thou coverest thyself with "a cloud, that our prayers should not pass through." Jonah ii. 4. "Then said I, I am cast out of thy sight." And may not you be mistaken in this matter, as well as they?

Query 2. *Though God's abhorring, and final rejecting prayer, be an argument of his abhorring the person that prays; yet dare we conclude so from a mere suspension of the answer? God may bear long with his own elect, that cry unto him day and night,* Luke xviii. 7.

Query 3. *Can you deny but that there are some signs appearing in your souls, even whilst God suspends his answer, that argue your prayers are not rejected by him?* As, (1.) Though no answer come, yet you are still resolved to wait: You dare not say as that profane wretch did, 2 Kings vi. 33. "This evil is of the Lord, why should "I wait for him any longer?" (2.) You can clear and justify God still, and lay the reason and cause of his silence upon yourselves. So did David, Psal. xxii. 2, 3. "O my God, I cry in the day time, "and thou hearest not; and in the night, and am not silent, but "thou art holy," &c. (3.) The suspension of God's answer makes you inquisitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obstruct your prayers. So the church, Lam. iii. 8. "He shutteth out my

" prayer :" And how doth this work? You may see, ver. 40. Let " us search and try our ways." Well, then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your souls.

And thus I have shewn you how to keep your hearts, in a dark and doubting season, from those desperate conclusions of unbelief. God forbid any false heart should encourage itself from these things; it is our unhappiness that when we give saints and sinners their proper portions, that each of them are so prone to take up the other's part. *Caution.*

Season 11. The eleventh special season calling for this diligence ' to keep your hearts, is, when sufferings for religion come to an ' height, then look to your hearts, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. " All these ' are the beginning of sorrows, and they shall deliver you up to be ' afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations ' for my name's sake; and then shall many be offended." When ' sufferings for religion grow hot, then blessed is he that is not of- ' fended in Christ, troubles are then at an height. (1) When a man's ' nearest friends and relations forsake and leave him, Mic. vii. 5, 6. ' 2 Tim. iv. 16. When a man is engaged alone. (2.) When it comes ' to resisting to blood, Heb. xii. 4. (3.)When temptations are pre- ' sented to us in our sufferings, Heb. xi. 37. (4.) When eminent ' persons for profession turn aside, and desert the cause, of Christ, ' 2 Tim. ii. 19. (5.) When God hides his face in a suffering hour, ' Jer. xvii. 17. (6.) When Satan falls upon us with strong tempta- ' tions, to question the grounds of our sufferings, or the soul's inte- ' rest in Christ: Now it is hard to keep the heart from turning back, ' and the steps from declining God's ways." The eleventh question, ' then, shall be this:

Case 11. *How the heart may be kept from relapsing under the greatest sufferings for religion?* If the bitterness of sufferings at any time cause thy soul to distaste the way of God, and take up thoughts of forsaking it; stay thine heart under that temptation, by propounding these eight questions solemnly to it.

Question 1. *What reproach and dishonour shall I pour upon Christ, and religion, by deserting him at such a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the world, that how much soever I have boasted of the promises, yet, when it comes to the trial, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them: And how will this open the mouths of Christ's enemies to blaspheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy name should be blasphemed through me! Shall I furnish the triumphs of the uncircumcised? Shall I make mirth in hell? O if I did but value the name of Christ, as much as many a wicked man values his own name, I could never endure to see it exposed to such contempt? Will proud dust and ashes venture death, yea, hell, rather than a blot upon their names? And shall I venture nothing to salve the honour and reputation of Christ?

Quest. 2. *Dare I violate my conscience to save my flesh? Wha*

shall comfort me when conscience wounds me? What comfort is there in life, liberty, or friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When Constantius threatened to cut off Samosatenus' right-hand, if he would not subscribe somewhat that was against his conscience, he held up both his hands to the messenger that was sent, saying, he shall cut off both, rather than I will do it: Farewell all peace, joy, and comfort, from that day forward. "Had Zimri peace, that "slew his master?" said Jezebel. So say I here, had Judas peace? Had Spira peace? And shall you have peace, if you tread in their steps? O consider what you do!

Quest. 3. *Is not the public interest of Christ and religion, infinitely more than any private interest of my own?* It is a famous passage, that of Terentius, captain to Adrian the emperor, he presented a petition to Adrian, that the Christians might have a temple by themselves, to worship God apart from the Arians: The emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him to ask something for himself, and it should be granted. But he modestly gathered up the pieces of his petition again, and told him, 'If he could not be heard in God's 'cause, he would never ask any thing for himself.' Yea, even Tully, though an heathen could say, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rempublicam;* he would not accept even of immortality itself, against the common-wealth. O if we had more public, we should not have such cowardly spirits!

Quest. 4. *Did Jesus Christ serve me so, when, for my sake, he exposed himself to far greater sufferings than can be, before me?* His sufferings were great indeed, he suffered from all hands, in all his offices, in every member, not only in his body, but in his soul; yea, the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings: Witness the bloody sweat in the garden; witness that heart-melting, and heaven-rending out-cry upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou "forsaken me?" And yet he flinched not, "he endured the cross, des-"pising the shame." Alas! what are my sufferings compared with Christ's? He hath drank up all that vinegar and gall that would make my sufferings bitter. When one of the martyrs was asked why he was so merry at his death? O, said he, it is because the soul of Christ was so heavy at his death. Did Christ bear such a burden for me, with unbroken patience, and constancy; and shall I shrink back from momentary, and light afflictions, for him?

Quest. 5. *Is not eternal life worth the suffering of a moment's pain?* If I suffer with him, I shall reign with him. O how will men venture life and limb for a fading crown, swim through seas of blood to a throne! and will I venture nothing? suffer nothing for the crown of glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my horse's heels from morning to night, take many a weary step through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it is but bones, and blows: If my soul had any true greatness, any sparks of generosity in it, how would it despise the sufferings of the way, for the glory of the end? how would it break down all difficulties before it? whilst, by an eye of faith, it sees

the forerunner, who is already entered, standing, as it were, upon the walls of heaven, with the crown in his hand, saying, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Come on, then, my soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, Rom. ii. 7.

Quest. 6. *Can I so easily cast off the society and company of the saints, and give the right-hand of fellowship to the wicked?* How can I part with such lovely companions as these have been? How often have I been benefited by their counsels? Ezra x. 3. how often refreshed, warmed, and quickened by their company? Eccl. iv. 10, 11. how often have I fasted and prayed with them? What sweet counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the house of God in company? And shall I now shake hands with them, and say, Farewell all ye saints for ever; I shall never be among you more: Come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my body and soul be rent asunder, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.

Quest. 7. *Have I seriously considered the terrible scripture-comminations against backsliders?* O my heart! darest thou turn thy back upon the very point of such threatenings as these? Jer. xvii. 5, 6. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and "maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the Lord; "for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when "good cometh," i. e. The curse of God shall wither him root and branch. And Heb. x. 26, 27. "If we sin wilfully, after we have re- "ceived the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacri- "fice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery "indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." And again, ver. 38. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him:" As if he should say, 'Take him, world, take him, devil, for your 'own, I have no delight in him.' O who dare draw back when God has hedged up the way with such terrible threats as these!

Quest. 8. *Can I look Christ in the face at the day of judgment if I desert him now?*

"He that is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous "and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed "when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Yet a little while, and you shall see the sign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; the last trump shall sound, the dead, both small and great, even all that sleep in the dust shall awake, and come before that great white throne, on which Christ shall sit in that day. And now do but imagine thou sawest the trembling knees and quivering lips of guilty sinners; imagine thou heardest the dreadful sentence of the Judge upon them, "Go, ye cursed," &c. and then a cry. Oh! the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there shall be.

Wouldst thou desert Christ now, to protract a poor, miserable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the sayings of Christ be sealed and faithful, this shall be the portion of the apostate. It is an easy thing to stop the mouth of conscience now, but will it be easy to stop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart that it depart not from the living God.

Season 12. The twelfth season of looking diligently to our hearts and keeping them with greatest care, is the time of sickness: 'When 'a child of God draws nigh to eternity, when there are but a few 'sands more in the upper part of his glass to run down; now Satan 'busily bestirs himself; of him it may be said, as of the natural ser- 'pent, *nunquam nisi moriens producitur in longum;* he is never seen 'at his full length till dying: And now his great design, since he can- 'not win the soul from God, is to discourage, and make it unwilling 'to go to God, though the gracious soul, with Jacob, should then 'rouse up itself upon a dying bed, and rejoice that the marriage-day 'of the Lamb is now almost come; though it should then say, with 'dying Austin, *vivere renuo ut Christo vivam;* I despise life to be 'with Christ. Or as dying Milius, when one asked him, whether he 'were willing to die? O said he, *illus est nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad 'Christum;* let him be unwilling to die who is unwilling to go to 'Christ. But O! what shrinking from death? What lothness to 'depart, may sometimes (indeed too frequently) be observed in the 'people of God? How loth are some of them to take death by the 'cold hand? If such a liberty were indulged to us, not to be dis- 'solved till we dissolve ourselves; when should we say with St. Paul, '"I desire to be dissolved?" Well then, the last case shall be this.

Case 12. *How the people of God, in times of sickness, may get their hearts loose from all earthly engagements, and persuade them into a willingness to die.*

And there are seven arguments, which I shall urge upon the people of God at such a time as this, to make them cheerfully entertain the messengers of death, and die as well as well as live, like saints. And the first is this:

Argument 1. First, *The harmlessness of death to the people of God.* Though it keep its *dart*, it hath lost its sting: A saint (to allude to that, Isa. xi. 8.) "May play upon the hole of the asp, and put his "hand into the cockatrice's den." Death is the cockatrice, or asp, the grave is his hole or den; a saint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it: It hath left and lost its sting in the sides of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! where is thy sting?" Why art thou afraid, O saint, that this sickness may be thy death, as long as thou knowest that the death of Christ is the death of death? Indeed, if thou didst die in thy sins, as John viii. 21. if death, as a king, did reign over thee, Rom. v. 14. If it could feed upon thee, as the lion doth upon the prey he hath taken, as Psalm xlix. 14. If "hell fol- "lowed the pale horse," as it is, Rev. vi. 1. then thou mightest well

startle and shrink back from it; but when God hath put away thy sins from thee, "as far as the east is from the west," Psal. ciii. 12. as long as there is no other evil left in death for thee to encounter with but bodily pain; as long as the scriptures represent it to thee under such harmless and easy notions, as the putting off thy clothes, 2 Cor. v. 2. "And lying down to sleep upon thy bed," Isa. lvii. 2. Why shouldst thou be afraid? There is as much difference betwixt death to the people of God, and others, as betwixt the unicorn's horn, when it is upon the head of that fierce beast, and when it is in the apothecary's shops, where it is made salubrious and medicinal.

Arg. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from shrinking back at such a time as this, by considering the necessity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I assure thee there is no other way to obtain the full satisfaction of thy soul, and complete its happiness; till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aside the curtain of the flesh, thy soul cannot see God: This animal life stands betwixt him and thee, 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilst we are at home "in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Thy body must be refined and cast into a new mould, else that new wine of heavenly glory would break it. Paul, in his highest rapture, 2 Cor. xii. 4. when he heard things unutterable, was then but as a stander-by, a looker-on, not admitted into the company as one of them; but as the angels are in our assemblies, so was Paul in that glorious assembly above, and no otherwise; and yet even for this he must, as it were, be taken out of the body, unclothed for a little time, to have a glimpse of that glory, and then put on his clothes again. O then! who would not be willing to die for a full sight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy soul should look and sigh, like a prisoner, through the grates of this mortality: "O that I had wings like a dove, then would "I fly away, and be at rest:" Most men need patience to die, but a saint that understands what death admits him to, should rather need patience to live; methinks he should often look out, and listen on a death-bed for his Lord's coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, should say, "The voice of my beloved! be- "hold, he cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping upon the "hills," Cant. ii. 8.

Arg. 3. *Another argument persuading to this willingness, is the immediate succession of a more excellent and glorious life.*

It is but a wink, and you shall see God: Your happiness shall not be deferred till the resurrection; but as soon as the body is dead, the gracious soul is swallowed up in life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. When once you have loosed from this shore, in a few moments, your souls will be wafted over upon the wings of angels to the other shore of a glorious eternity. Phil. i. 23. "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Did the soul and body die together, as Berilius taught; or did they

sleep till the resurrection, as others have groundlessly fancied; it had been a madness for Paul to desire a dissolution for the enjoyment of Christ: For if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ whilst his soul dwelt in its fleshly tabernacle, than he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the soul's living, known in scripture, viz. the life of *faith*, and the life of *vision*, 1 Cor. v. 5. Those two divideth all time, both present and future, betwixt them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. If when faith fails, sight should not immediately succeed, what would become of the unbodied soul? But blessed be God, this great heart-establishing truth is evidently revealed in scripture, Luke xxiii. 43. You have Christ's promise, John xiv. 3. "I will come and re-"ceive you to myself." O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition? Rouse up, dying saint; when thy soul is come out a little further; when it shall stand like Abraham at its tent-door, the angels of God shall soon be with it: the souls of the elect are, as it were, put out to the angels to nurse, and when they die, these angels carry them home again to their Father's house: if an angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a saint the answer of his prayer, Dan. ix. 22. how much more will the angels come post from heaven to receive and transfer the praying soul itself?

Arg. 4. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingness to die, to consider, that by death, God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth*, Rev. xiv. 13. "Write, "from henceforth, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It is God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to set his people out of harm's way before-hand, Isa. lvii. 1. "Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come." So Mic. vii. 2. when such an evil time comes as is there described, "That they all lie in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother "with a net:" God, by an act of favour, houses his people before-hand. Dost thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art so loth to leave? Thy God removes thee for thy great advantage; thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor saints must stand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

It is observed that Methuselah died the very year before the flood; Augustine, a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus, just before the taking of Heidelburgh: Luther observes, that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem: and Luther himself died before the wars broke out in Germany. It may be the Lord sees thy tender heart cannot endure to see the misery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace; and yet wilt thou cry, O spare me a little longer!

Arg. 5. *If yet thy heart hang back, consider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth*; and that, (1.) As to your communion with God: (2.) As to your communion with saints.

1. For your communion with God: the time of perfecting that is now come: thy soul shall shortly stand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it: here thy soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory strike it but obliquely and feebly, but shortly it will be under the line, and there the sun shall stand still, as it did in Gibeon; there shall be no cloudings, nor declinings of it. O how should this fill thy soul with desires of being unclothed!

2. As for the enjoyment of saints, here indeed we have fellowship with them of the lower form; but that fellowship is so dissweetened by remaining corruptions, that there is no satisfaction in it; as it is the greatest plague that can befal an hypocrite to live in a pure church, so it is the greatest vexation to the spirit of a saint, to live in a corrupt and disordered church; but when death hath admitted you into that glorious assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, you shall have the desire of your hearts; here you cannot fully close with another; yea, you cannot fully close with your own souls. O what discords, jarrings, censurings are here? What perfect, blessed harmony there! In heaven each saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely. O my soul, haste thee away from the lion's dens, from the mountains of Bether, from divided saints, to those mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincense: thou art now going unto thine own people, as the apostle's phrase imports, Cor. v. 8.

Arg. 6. If this will not do, *Consider what heavy burdens death will ease thy shoulders of.*

In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened, (1.) With bodily distempers; how true do we find that of Theophrastus. The soul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in? But glorified bodies are clogged with no indispositions; death is the best physician; it will cure thee of all diseases at once. (2.) With the indwelling of sin; this makes us groan from the very bowels, Rom. vii. 24. "But he "that is dead, is free from sin," Rom. vi. 7. Hath justification destroyed its *damning power*, and sanctification its *reigning power?* So glorification destroys its very being and existence. (3.) We groan under temptations here, but as soon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation: when once thou art got into heaven, thou mayest say, Now Satan, I am there where thou canst not come; for as the damned in hell are *malo obformati*, so fixed in sin and misery, that their condition cannot be altered; so glorified saints are *bono confirmati*, so fixed in holiness and glory, that they cannot be shaken. (4.) Here we groan under various troubles, and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. O then let us haste away, that we may be at rest!

Argument 7. If still thou linger, like Lot in Sodom, then, *lastly, examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth.* Why art thou unwilling to die?

Objection 1. O I have many relations in the world, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Solution. If thou art troubled about their bodies, and outward condition, why should not that word satisfy thee, Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave "thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy "widows trust in me." Luther, in his last will and testament, hath this expression, 'Lord, thou hast given me wife and children, I have 'nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father 'of the fatherless, and judge of widows, *Nutri, serva, doce;* nourish, 'keep, and teach them.' Or, art thou troubled for their souls? Thou canst not convert them, if thou shouldst live, and God can make thy prayers and counsels to live, and take place upon them when thou art dead.

Objection 2. I would fain live to do God more service in the world.

Solution. Well, but if he have no more service for thee to do here, why shouldst thou not say with David, "If he have no delight to use "me any farther, here am I, let him do what seemeth him good." In this world thou hast no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher service and employment in heaven; and what thou wouldst do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

Objection 3. I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a bride, completely adorned for the bridegroom.

Solution. Thy justification is complete already, though thy sanctification be not so; and the way to make it so, is to die; for till then it will have its defects, and wants.

Objection 4. O but I want assurance; if I had that, I could die presently.

Solution. Yea, there it sticks, indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be freed from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance; no carnal person was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And thus I have finished those cases which so nearly concern the people of God, in the several conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

I. *Use, of Information.*

YOU have heard, that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Christian, in which the very soul and life of religion consists, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence, then, I shall infer, to the consternation of hypocrites, and formal professors.

1. *That the pains and labours which many persons have taken in religion, are but lost labour and pains, to no purpose, such as will never turn to account.*

Many great services have been performed, many glorious works

are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and shall never stand upon record, in order to an eternal acceptation, because they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in those duties: this is that fatal rock, upon which thousands of vain professors have split themselves eternally: they are curious about the externals of religion, but regardless of their hearts. O how many hours have some professors spent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring! and yet, as to the main end of religion, as good they had sat still, and done nothing; for all this signifies nothing, the great work, I mean heart work, being all the while neglected. Tell me, thou vain professor, when didst thou shed a tear for the deadness, hardness, unbelief, or earthliness of thy heart? Thinkest thou such an easy religion can save thee? If so, we may invert Christ's words, and say, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to "life, and many there be that go in thereat." Hear me, thou self-deluding hypocrite, thou that hast put off God with heartless duties, thou that hast acted in religion, as if thou hadst been blessing an idol, that couldst not search and discover thy heart; thou that hast offered to God but the skin of the sacrifice, not the marrow, fat and inwards of it: how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy head before him, when he shall say, O thou dissembling, false-hearted man! how couldst thou profess religion? With what face couldst thou so often tell me that thou lovedst me, when thou knew all the while, in thine own conscience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think what a fearful judgment it is to be given over to a heedless, and careless heart; and then to have religious duties, instead of a rattle, to quiet and still the conscience!

2. Hence also infer for the *humiliation*, even of upright hearts, *That unless the people of God spend more time and pains about their hearts, than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much service, or be owners of much comfort in this world.*

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and careless in keeping his heart, as Jacob said of Reuben, "Thou shalt not excel." It grieves me to see how many Christians there are that go up and down dejected, and complaining, that live at a poor low rate, both of service and comfort; and how can they expect it should be otherwise, as long as they live at such a careless rate? O how little of their time is spent in the closet in searching, humbling, and quickening their hearts?

You say your hearts are dead, and do you wonder they are so, as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? If your bodies had been dieted as your souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them: *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam;* he that will not have the *sweat*, must not expect the *sweet* of religion.

O Christians! I fear your zeal and strength have run in the wrong

channel; I fear most of us may take up the Church's complaint, Cant. i. 6. "They have made me the keeper of the vineyards, but "mine own vineyard have I not kept." Two things have eaten up the time and strength of the professors of this generation, and sadly diverted them from heart-work: (1.) Fruitless controversies started by Satan, I doubt not, to this very purpose, to take us off from practical godliness, to make us puzzle our heads when we should be searching our hearts. O how little have we minded that of the apostle, Heb. xiii. 9. "It is a good thing that the heart be established "with grace, and not with meats;" i. e. with disputes and controversies about meats, "which have not profited them that have been "occupied therein."

O how much better is it to see men *live exactly*, than to hear them *dispute subtlely!* These unfruitful questions, how have they rent the churches, wasted time and spirits, and called Christians off from their main business, from looking to their own vineyard? What think ye, sirs? Had it not been better if the questions agitated among the people of God of late days had been such as these? How shall a man discern the special, from the common operations of the Spirit? How may a soul observe its first declinings from God? How may a backsliding Christian recover his first love? How may the heart be preserved from unseasonable thoughts in duty? How may a bosom-sin be discovered, and mortified, &c. would not this have tended more to the credit of religion and comfort of your souls? O it is time to repent and be ashamed of this folly! When I read what Suarez, a Papist, said, who wrote many tomes of disputations, that he prized the time he set apart for the searching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he spent in other studies: I am ashamed to find the professors of this age yet insensible of their folly. Shall the conscience of a Suarez feel a relenting pang for strength and time so ill employed, and shall not yours? This is it your ministers long since warned you of; your spiritual nurses were afraid of the rickets, when they saw our heads only to grow, and our hearts to whither. O when will God beat our swords into plow-shares! I mean, our disputes and contentions into practical godliness. (2.) Another cause of neglecting our hearts hath been earthly incumbrances; the heads and hearts of many have been filled with such a croud and noise of worldly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love, and delight in God; in their heavenly, serious, and profitable way of conversing with men.

O how hath this wilderness entangled us! our discourses and conferences, nay, our very prayers and duties have a tang of it: we have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the sad complaint of an holy one *, 'O (saith he)

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*Mr. Strong.

'it is sad to think how many precious opportunities I have lost; 'how many sweet motions and admonitions of the Spirit I have pas-'sed over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain: in the 'secret illapses of his Spirit, the Lord hath called upon me, but my 'worldly thoughts did still lodge within me, and there was no place 'within my heart for such calls of God." Surely there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly employments; God would never have put us upon them to our loss; "Enoch walked with God, and "begat sons and daughters," Gen. v. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and separate himself from the things of this life: and the angels that are employed by Christ in the things of this world, (for the spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time; yet they lose nothing of the beatifical vision all the time of their administration: for Mat. xviii. 10. "Their angels (even whilst they are employed "for them) behold the face of their Father which is in heaven." We need not lose our visions by our employments, if the fault were not our own. Alas! that ever Christians, who stand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands than this poor moment of interposing time is sufficient for, should yet be filling both their heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence I infer for the *awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Christian, then there are but few real Christians in the world.*

Indeed if every one that hath learned the dialect of Christianity, and can talk like a saint: if every one that hath gifts and parts, and by the common assisting presence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or discourse like a Christian; in a word, if such as associate themselves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, may pass for Christians, the number then is great.

But, alas! to what a small number will they shrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there that make conscience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, *&c.* O there be but few closet men among professors! It is far easier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion than to these: The profane part of the world will not so much as touch with the outside of religious duties, much less with this; and for the hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about those externals, yet you can never persuade him to this inward work, this difficult work, to which there is no inducement by human applause; this work, that would quickly discover what the hypocrite cares not to know; so that by a general consent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few secret ones, and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

II. *Use, for Exhortation.*

If the keeping of the heart be so important a business; if such choice advantages accrue to you thereby; if so many dear and precious

interests be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall close to this work.

O study your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts! away with fruitless controversies, and all idle questions; away with empty names and vain shews; away with unprofitable discourse and bold censures of others; turn in upon yourselves; get into your closets, and now resolve to dwell there. You have been strangers to this work too long; you have kept others vineyards too long; you have trifled about the borders of religion too long; this world hath detained you from your great work too long; will you now resolve to look better to your hearts? Will you haste and come out of the crowds of business, and clamours of the world, and retire yourselves more than you have done? O that this day you would resolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I should prevail with thee: All that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldst step aside a little oftener to talk with God, and thine own heart; that thou wouldst not suffer every trifle to divert thee; that thou wouldst keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldst but seriously demand of this thy own heart, at least every evening, O my heart, where hast thou been to-day? Whither hast thou made a road to-day? If all that hath been said by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you. And the first is this:

1 Motive. *The studying, observing, and diligent keeping of your own hearts, will marvellously help your understanding in the deep mysteries of religion.*

An honest well-experienced heart, is a singular help to a weak head; such a heart will serve you instead of a *commentary* upon a great part of the scriptures: By this means you shall far better understand the things of God, than the learned rabbies and profound doctors (if graceless and unexperienced) ever did; you shall not only have a more clear, but a more sweet perception and gust of them: A man may discourse orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of conscience, the sweetness of communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and sweet impressions of these things upon his own spirit: but O how dark and dry are these notions, compared with his upon whose heart they have been acted? When such a man reads David's Psalms, or Paul's epistles, there he finds his own objections made and answered. O, saith he, these holy men speak my very heart: Their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember Chrysostom, speaking to his people of Antioch about some choice experiences, used this expression: *Sciunt initiati quid dico:* Those that are initiated, know what I say: Experience is the best schoolmaster. O then, study your hearts, keep your hearts!

2 Motive. *The study and observation of your own hearts will antidote you against the dangerous and infecting errors of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reason that so many professors in England have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables; that so many thousands have been led away by the error of the wicked; that Jesuits and Quakers, who have sown corrupt doctrine, have had such plentiful harvests among us, but because they have met with a company of empty notional professors, that never knew what belongs to practical godliness, and the study of their own hearts.

If professors did but give diligence to study, search and watch their own hearts, they would have that ἰδιον στηριγμον, that stedfastness of their own, that Peter speaks of, 1 Pet. iii. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, Heb. xiii. 9. Suppose a subtle Papist should talk to such of the dignity and merit of good works; could he ever work the persuasion of it into that heart that is conscious to itself of so much darkness, deadness, distraction and unbelief, attending its best duties? It is a good rule, *Non est disputandum de gustu:* There is no disputing against taste. What a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3 Motive. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of religion that differences the sound from the unsound professor: It is wonderful to consider how far hypocrites go in all external duties; how plausibly they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the world.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts; they are not in secret what they appear to be in public: And before this trial no hypocrite can stand. It is confessed they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints. In our law, no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed that the extremity of the torture may make him say any thing to be eased. But if self-jealousy, care, and watchfulness, be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, it strongly argues the sincerity of it: For what but the sense of a divine eye; what but the real hatred of sin as sin, could put thee upon those secret duties, which lie out of the observation of all creatures?

If then it be a desirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair testimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth, that thou fearest God; then study thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

4 Motive. *How fruitful, sweet, and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us, if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God every time you approach him, if your hearts were but in frame! You might then say with David, Psal. civ. 35. "My meditation of him shall be "sweet." That which loses all our comforts in ordinances and more secret duties, is the indisposedness of the heart: A Christian whose heart is in a good frame, gets the start of all others that come with

him in that duty: They strive hard to get up their hearts to God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them, and sometimes go away as bad as they came: Sometimes the duty is almost ended before their hearts begin to stir or feel any warmth, quickening, or power from it: But all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the first sight of Christ in a sermon, the first seal from Christ in a sacrament, the first kiss from Christ in secret prayer. I tell you, and tell you but what I have felt, that prayers and sermons would appear to you other manner of things than they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them; you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a lost duty to me! if you had not lost your hearts, it had not been so. If then the comfort of ordinances be sweet, look to your hearts, keep your hearts.

5 Motive. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a fountain of matter to you in prayer.*

A man that is diligent in heart-work, and knows the state of his own soul, will have a fountain-fulness of matter to supply him richly in all his addresses to God; his tongue shall not faulter and make pause for want of matter; Psal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing a good "matter:" Or, as Montanus renders the original, my heart is boiling up good matter, like a living spring, that is still bubbling up fresh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer: Others must pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loss, when they have done all: but if thou have kept, and faithfully studied thine own heart, it will be with thee (as Job speaks in another case) like bottles full of new wine that want vent, which are ready to burst: As holy matter flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a heart. When a heart-experienced Christian is mourning before God over some special heart-corruption, wrestling with God for the supply of some special inward want, he speaks not as other men do that have learned to pray by rote; their confessions and petitions are squeezed out; his drop freely, like pure honey from the comb: It is a happiness then to be with or near such a Christian. I remember Bernard, having given rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concludes them thus, *Et cum talis fueris, momento mei;* and (saith he) When thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

6 Motive. *By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among professors, which is the most desirable state in this world.*

O that I might live to see that day, when professors shall not walk in a vain shew, when they shall please themselves no more with a name to live, being spiritually dead! When they shall be no more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain, and unserious persons, but the majestic beams of holiness shining from their heavenly and serious conversation, shall awe the world, and command reverence from all that are about them; when they shall warm the hearts of

those that come nigh them, so that men shall say, God is in these men of a truth.

Well, such a time may again be expected, according to that promise, Isa. lx. 21. "The people shall be all righteous." But till we pursue closer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed days; I cannot expect better times till God gives better hearts. Doth it not grieve you to see what a scorn religion is made in the world? what objects of contempt and scorn the professors of it are made in the world?

Professors, would you recover your credit? Would you again obtain an honourable testimony in the consciences of your very enemies? Then keep your hearts, watch your hearts: it is the looseness, frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts that have made your lives so; and these have brought you under the contempt of the world; you first lost your sights of God, and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious deportment among men, and by that your interest in their consciences: O then, for the credit of religion, for the honour of your profession keep your hearts!

7 Motive. *By diligence in keeping your hearts, we should prevent, and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling-blocks out of the way of the world.*

"Woe to the world (saith Christ) because of offences!" Matth. xviii. 7. Doth not shame cover your faces? Do not your hearts bleed within you, to hear of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? Could you not, like Shem and Japhet, go backward with a garment to cover the shame of many professors? How is that worthy name blasphemed! Jam. ii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. the hearts of the righteous saddened, Psal. xxv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. by this the world is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and religion, the bonds of death made fast upon their souls; those that have a general love and liking to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus soul-blood is shed: woe to the world!

Yea, how are the consciences of fallen professors plunged, and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their souls from all comfortable fellowship with himself, and the joys of his salvation: infinite are the mischiefs that come by the scandalous lives of professors.

And what is the true cause and reason of all this, but the neglecting of their hearts? Were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented. Had David kept his heart, he had not broken his bones: a negligent and careless heart must of necessity produce a disorderly and scandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulness of a * reverend brother, in shewing professors their manifold miscarriages; and from my heart do wish, that when their wounds have been thoroughly searched by that probe, God would be pleased to heal them by this plaister. O professors! if ever you will keep

* Gospel-Glass.

religion sweet; if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the world, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or lose your credit; keep your hearts, or lose your comforts; keep your hearts lest ye shed soul-blood. What words can express the deep concernments, the wonderful consequences of this work! Every thing puts a necessity, a solemnity, a beauty upon it.

8 Motive. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God casts you into, or any service he hath to use you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for prosperity: and he that knows how to use and apply it to scripture-promises and supports, is fit to pass through any adversity: He that can deny the pride and selfishness of his heart is fit to be employed in any service for God. Such a man was Paul, he did not only spend his time in preaching to others, in keeping others vineyards, but he looked to himself, kept his own vineyard; 1 Cor. ix. 27. "Lest "when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." And what an eminent instrument was he for God? He could turn his hand to any work; he could dexterously manage both an adverse and prosperous condition: "I know how to abound, and how to suf- "fer want. Let the people deify him, it moves him not, unless to "indignation. Let them stone him, he can bear it; If a man purge "himself from these (saith he, 2 Tim. ii. 21.) he shall be a vessel "unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's house, and "prepared unto every good work."

First the heart must be purged, and then it is prepared for any service of God. When the heart of Isaiah was purified, which was the thing signified by the touching of his lips with a coal from the altar, Isa. vi. 7. then he was fit for God's work: "Here am I, send "me," ver. 8. A man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any service for God, and if it be attended with honour, it shall swell up and over-top his spirit; if with suffering it will exanimate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Father's work above all the servants that ever God employed: he was zealous in public work for God; so zealous, that sometimes he forgot to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been besides himself: but yet he so carried on his public work, as not to forget his own private communion with God: and therefore you read, Mat. xiii. 23. that when he had been labouring all day, yet, after that he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the vineyards look to their own vineyard: We shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own souls.

9 Motive. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of saints be thereby sweetened.*

How goodly then would be thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Then it is prophesied of the Jews, Zech. viii. 23.

"Men would say, we will go with you; for we have heard that God "is among you." It is the fellowship your souls have with the Father, and with the Son, that draws out the desires of others after fellowship with you, 1 John i. 3. I tell you, if saints would be persuaded to take more pains, and spend more time about their hearts, there would quickly be such a divine lustre upon the face of their conversations, that men would account it no small privilege to be with or near them.

It is the pride, passion, and earthliness of our hearts that have spoiled Christian fellowship. Whence is it, that when Christians meet, they are often jarring and contending? but only from their unmortified passions: whence are their uncharitable censures of their brethren: but only from self-ignorance: Why are they so rigid and unmerciful towards those that are fallen? but because they consider not themselves as the apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 1. Why is their discourse so frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthliness and vanity of their hearts?

My brethren, these be the things that have spoiled Christian fellowship, and made it become a dry and sapless thing; so that many Christians are even weary of it, and are ready to say with the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. "O that I had a cottage in the wilderness, &c. that I "might leave my people, and go from them!" And with David, Psal. cxx. 6. "My soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace." This hath made them long for the grave that they might go from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people, as the original of that text imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

But now if professors would study their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of communion again restored: they would divide no more, contend no more, censure rashly no more; when their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jar; how charitable, pitiful, and tender will they be of one another, when every one is daily humbled under the evils of his own heart. Lord, hasten those much-desired days, and bless these counsels in order to them!

10 Motive. Lastly, *By this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influence of all ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preserved in your souls than now they are.*

Ah! what would I give, that my soul might be preserved in that frame I sometimes find it in after an ordinance? *Aliquando intromittis me, Domine, in affectum multum inusitatim, introrsus ad quam nescio dulcedinem*, &c. Sometimes, O Lord, (saith one of the Fathers sweetly) thou admittest me into the most inward, unusual, and sweet delights, to I-know-not-what sweetness, which were it perfected in me, I know not what it would be, or rather, what it would not be. But alas! the heart grows careless again, and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire, to its native coldness. Could you but keep those things for ever in your hearts, what Christians

would you be? what lives would you live? and how is it that these things remain no longer with us? Doubtless it is because we suffer our hearts to take cold again; we should be as careful after an ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of a hot bath, or great sweat, is of going out into the chill air. We have our hot and cold fits by turns: and what is the reason but our unskilfulness and carelessness in keeping the heart?

It is a thousand pities, that the ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, should be like those human ordinances the apostle speaks of, that perish in the using. O then, let me say to you, as Job xv. 11. "Do the consolations of God "seem small to you?" Look over these ten special benefits; weigh them in a just balance: are they small matters? Is it a small matter to have thy weak understanding assisted? Thy endangered soul antidoted, thy sincerity cleared, thy communion with God sweetened, thy sails filled in prayer? Is it a small thing to have the decayed power of godliness again recovered, all fatal scandals removed, an instrumental fitness to serve Christ obtained, the communion of saints restored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the souls of saints? If these be no common blessings, no small benefits, then, surely, it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

The III. *Use, for Direction.*

The next use shall be for direction to some special means for the keeping of the heart. And here, besides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty *at the beginning of this discourse*, to which I refer the reader, and all those directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular cases and seasons; I shall farther add several other general means of excellent use to this end. And the first is this:

1 Mean. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been persuaded? Then furnish your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their best preservation against sin.*

Keep the word, and the word will keep you: as the first receiving of the word regenerated your hearts, so the keeping of the word within you will preserve your hearts: Col. iii. 16. "Let the word "of Christ dwell richly in you:" let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promises, threats; in all that is in you, in your understanding, memories, consciences, affections, and then it will preserve your hearts; Psalm cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in "mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." It is the slipperiness of our hearts in reference to the word, that causes so many slips in our lives. Conscience cannot be urged or awed with forgotten truths; but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright; Psalm xxxvii. 31. "The law of his God is in his heart: "none of his steps shall slide;" or if he do, the word will recover

the straying heart again; Mat. xxvi. 57. "Then Peter remembered the word of Jesus, and wept bitterly." We never lose our hearts, till they have first lost the efficacious and powerful impression of the word.

2 Mean. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Those that put a stock into the hands of unfaithful or suspicious servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them; "The heart is deceitful, above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. O it is as necessary as sweet, that we and our reins, that is, we and our secret thoughts, should confer together every night, Psalm xvi. 7. We should call our hearts to account every evening, and say, O my heart! Where hast thou been to-day? Where have thy thoughts been wandering to-day? What an account canst thou give of them? O naughty heart! vain heart! couldst thou not abide by the fountain of delights? Is there better entertainment with the creature than with God? The oftener the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandering, the less it will wander: If every vain thought were retracted with a sigh, every excursion of the heart from God with a severe check, it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside: those actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

3 Mean. *He that will keep his heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly business, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main business.*

It cannot be imagined he should keep his heart with God that hath lost himself in a wood of earthly business: Take heed you do not pinch your souls, by gratifying the immoderate desires of your flesh. I wish many Christians could truly say what an *heathen once did! 'I do not give, but only lend myself to business.' It is said Germanicus reigned in the hearts of the Romans; Tiberius only in their provinces. Though the world be in your hands, let it not justle Christ out of your hearts.

Take heed, Christian, lest thy shop steal away thy heart from thy closet; God never intended earthly employments for a stop, but rather for a step to heavenly ones. O let not Aristippus the heathen, arise in judgment against thee, who said, 'He would rather neglect 'his means, than his mind; his farm, than his soul.' If thy ship be overloaden, thou must cast some overboard: More business than thou canst well manage, is like more meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly soul.

4 Mean. *He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.*

He that will find his house in good repair, must stop every chink as soon as discovered; and he that will keep his heart, must not let

* Seneca.

a vain thought be long neglected; the serpent of heart-apostasy is best killed in the egg of a small remission of care. Oh! if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are in? We may say of heart-neglects, as the apostle doth of vain babblings; that they increase to more and more ungodliness. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus;* little sins neglected, will quickly become great and masterless: The greatest *crocodile* once lay in an egg; the greatest *oak* was once but an acorn. The firing of a small train of powder may blow up all, by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

5 Mean. *Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetnsss of your communion with God, lest thereby your hearts be loosed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and restless thing; it will have something to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for something among the creatures, and there it often loses itself, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a constancy and evenness in walking with God, than the sweetness which it tastes therein: As the Gauls, when once they tasted the sweet wine of Italy, could never be satisfied till they conquered the country where it grew.

It is true, conscience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it; but when there is no higher motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with distractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the motions of the heart upwards would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6 Mean. *Habituate thy heart to spiritual meditations, if thou wouldst have it free from those burdensome diversions.*

By this mean you will get a facility and dexterity in heart-work: It is pity those smaller portions of our time betwixt solemn duties should lie upon our hands, and be rendered useless to us. O learn to save, and be good husbands upon your thoughts. To this purpose a neat author * speaks; 'These parentheses, which happen to come 'between the more solemn passages (whether business or recreations) 'of human life, are wont to be lost by most men for want of a due 'value for them, and even by good men, for want of skill to pre-'serve them; for though they do not properly despise them, yet 'they neglect, or lose them, for want of knowing how to rescue 'them, or what to do with them: But although grains of sand and 'ashes be, apart, but of a despicable smallness, and liable to be scat-'tered and blown away, yet the skilful artificer, by a vehement fire, 'brings numbers of those to afford him that noble substance, glass, 'by whose help we may both see ourselves, and our blemishes lively

* Boyle's occasional reflect. p. 9, 10.

'represented (as in looking-glasses) and discern celestial objects (as 'with the telescopes) and with the sun beams kindle disposed mate-'rials (as with burning glasses:) So when these little fragments, or 'parcels of time, which if not carefully looked to, would be dis-'sipated and lost, come to be managed by a skilful contemplator, and 'to be improved by the celestial fire of devotion, they may be so 'ordered as to afford us both looking-glasses to dress our souls by, 'and prospectives to discover heavenly wonders and incentives to in-'flame our hearts with zeal;' Thus far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a public benefit, if God give life to finish, and opportunity to produce it: Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

IV. *Use of Consolation.*

I shall now close the whole with a word or two of consolation to all diligent and serious Christians, that faithfully and closely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in secret over the hardness, pride, earthliness, and vanity of their hearts; that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness and falseness of them, whilst other vain professors eyes are abroad, their time and strength eaten up by fruitless disputes and earthly employments, or, at best, by a cold and formal performance of some heartless and empty duties. Poor Christian! I have three things to offer thee, in order to thy support and comfort; and, doubtless, either of them alone, mixed with faith, is sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou hast with thine own heart.

1. Comfort. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honest, whatever thy gifts and abilities are.*

It is uprightness of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed; 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. "Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed "to the Lord, saying, remember now, O Lord, how I have walked "before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart," &c.

I am really of his mind, who said, *si mihi daretur optio, eligerim Christiani rustici sordidissimum & maxime agreste opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæsaris;* might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustic Christian, before all the victories and triumphs of Alexander or Cæsar; yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain professors; before the tongues of men and angels. It will signify more to my comfort, to spend one solitary hour in mourning before the Lord over heart-corruption, than many hours in a seeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties with the greatest enlargements and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, Matth. vi. 5. The one is for the street and synagogue, for the observation and applause of men, but the other is a closet-man, he drives on a home-trade, a heart-trade. Never be troubled

then for the want of those things that a man may have and be eternally damned; but rather bless God for that which none but the favourites and darlings of heaven have. Many a one is now in hell that had a better head than mine; and many a one now in heaven that complained of as bad a heart as thine.

2 Comfort. *Know further for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under so many heart-troubles and burdens if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord! why is it thus? Why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow in my heart? Thus long have I been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart. Many years have I been praying and striving against vain thoughts, yet am still infested and perplexed with them. O when shall I get a better heart! I have been in travail, and brought forth but wind; I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, sermons and sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and still my sore runneth, and ceaseth not.

Pensive soul! Let this comfort thee; thy God designs thy benefit, even by these occasions of thy sad complaints. For (1.) Hereby he would let thee see what thy heart by nature is and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholden to free grace. He leaves thee under these exercises of spirit, that thou mayest lie, as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of glory should take so vile a creature into his bosom. Thy base heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet serves to commend and set off the unsearchable riches of free grace. (2.) This serves to beat thee off continually from resting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteousness or excellency. The corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee sensible to feel that the bed is too short, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for those reflections thou hast after duties, upon the dulness and distractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldst thou be to fall in love with, and admire thine own performances and enlargements? For if notwithstanding these, thou hast much to do with the pride of thy heart, how much more; if such humbling and self-abasing considerations were wanting. And, lastly, this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others: Perhaps thou wouldst have little pity for the distresses and soul-troubles of others, if thou hadst less experience of thine own.

3 Comfort. *To conclude; God will shortly put a blessed end to all these troubles, cares and watchings.*

The time is coming, when thy heart shall be as thou wouldst have it; when thou shalt be discharged of all these cares, fears, and sorrows, and never cry out, O my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more! When all darkness shall be vanished from thine understanding; and thou shalt clearly discover all truths in God, that crystal ocean of truth: When all vanity shall be purged perfect-

ly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly, and delightfully entertained and exercised upon that supreme goodness, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they shall never start any more like a broken bow. And as for thy pride, passion, earthliness, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it shall be said of them, as of the Egyptians to Israel, "Stand still, and see the "salvation of God." These corruptions thou seest to day, henceforth thou shalt see them no more for ever! when thou shalt lay down thy weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the armour of light, not to fight, but triumph in.

Lord! when shall this blessed day come? How long! how long! holy and true? My soul waiteth for thee! Come, my Beloved! and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. *Amen.*

THE

TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY:

OR,

THE SIGNS OF GRACE, AND SYMPTOMS OF HYPOCRISY.

Opened in a practical Treatise upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

The Epistle to the Reader.

Reader,

AMONG the difficulties and severities of true religion, the faithful searching, and diligent keeping of our hearts are found in the first and highest rank of difficulties: These two take up the main work of a Christian betwixt them, *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* I had hopes that these *essays* for the *searching of the heart*, might much sooner have followed my former for *keeping the heart.** But providence hath reserved it for the fittest season.

It comes to thy hand, Reader, in a day of straits and fears, a dark and gloomy season; when the nations about us are made drunk with their own blood, and filled with the wine of astonishment? in a day when the cup is ready to pass unto us, and a storm seems to be rising in the fears of many, and threatening the *protestant* interest in these reformed nations. Some men very considerable for piety and learn-

* A Saint Indeed.

ing from that scripture, Rev. xiii. 3. "The deadly wound," (viz. That given the beast by the reformation) *was healed*, have concluded, that popery will once more over-run the reformed nations: And one of great renown in all the churches of Christ, foretelling this furious, but short storm, comforts the people of God with this, That it is like to fall heaviest upon the worshippers in the *outward court*, namely the formal professors of the times.

O how much is every man now concerned to have his estate and condition well cleared, and to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure!

It should both amaze and grieve a pious mind, to see how some ingenious persons can sit with unwearied patience and pleasure, racking their brains upon some dry *school problem*, or some nice *mathematical point;* whilst no reasons or persuasions can prevail with them to spend one serious hour in the search and study of their own hearts!

It was the saying of the great Cicero, *Libenter omnibus omnes opes concesserim, ut mihi liceat, vi nulla interpellante, isto modo literis vivere:* I would give all the wealth in the world that I might wholly live in my studies, and have nothing to hinder me. What a brave offer had that been, if heaven, and the clearing of a title to it, had been the subject-matter of those studies! *Crede mihi, extingui dulce esset, mathematicarum artium studio*, saith another; i. e. Believe me, it were a sweet death to die in the study of the *mathematical arts:* And I should be apt to believe it too, did I not know that eternal judgment immediately follows death; and that they who stand at the door of eternity have higher matters to mind than *mathematical niceties.* To discern the harmonies and proportions in nature is pleasant; but, to discern the harmony and proportion of the *signs* of grace laid down in the word, with the works of grace wrought in our *souls*, is a far more pleasant and necessary employment: and, to be extinguished in such a work as this, were a lovely death indeed: "Blessed is that "servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!"

My friends, a day of trouble is near, a dying hour approacheth us; and when our eye-strings and heart-strings are breaking; when we are taking the last grasp of Christ, and the promises, you will then know to what purpose those hours spent in such work as this were. Search yourselves, yea, search yourselves before the decree bring forth, as that text may be read, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Enter into "thy chamber and shut thy door;" 'sit close to this employment 'thou art here directed to: and however times shall govern, whether 'it be fair or foul weather abroad, thou shalt never repent such an 'expence of thy time.' *Nusquam requiem inveni, nisi in libro, & claustro*, said a devout soul once; I am never better than when I am at my book, or on my knees.

This may seem but a dull, melancholy life to the brisk and airy spirits of these times; but let us be content with it as it is, and leave them (if we cannot have their company) to their sportiveness and

frolics, never once grudging them in their short and dear-bought pleasures. Assurance, That sin is pardoned, and Christ is ours, with the unspeakable joys that are inseparably connected therewith, is that "white stone, and new name, which none knows but he that "receives it;" for no words can possibly signify to another what that soul tastes and feels in such an hour as that is.

And be not discouraged at the difficulty of obtaining it: This *white stone* is no *philosopher's stone*, which no man could ever say he had in his own hand; for many a Christian hath really found it in waiting upon the Lord by prayer, and diligently searching the scriptures and his own heart.

Reader, the time will come when they that scoff at the serious diligence of the saints, and break many a pleasant jest upon the most solemn and awful things in religion, will tremble when they shall hear the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" and see the lamps of all vain and formal professors expire, and none admitted into the marriage but such whose lamps are furnished with oil; i. e. such whose professions and duties are enlivened and maintained by vital springs and principles of real grace within them.

It is a very remarkable story that Melchior Adams records in the life of Gobelinus; that a little before his time there was a play set forth at Isenach in Germany, of the *wise* and *foolish virgins*, wherein the Virgin Mary was one of the five saints that represented the wise virgins, was brought in with the rest, telling the *foolish virgins* that cried to her for oil, that it was too late: and then others representing the *foolish virgins*, fell a weeping, and making most bitter lamentations.

Hereat prince Frederic (who was one of the spectators) greatly amazed, cried out, *Quid est fides nostra Christiana, si neque Maria, neque alia Sancta exorari potest!* &c. What is our faith worth, and to what purpose are all our good works, if neither Mary nor any other saint can help us! And such was his consternation, that it threw him into a sore and violent disease which ended in an apoplexy, whereof he died about four days after.

If the representation of these things in a play ended the life of so great a man so tragically; O think with thyself, Reader, what will the effects of the Lord's real appearance in the clouds of heaven, and the mourning and wailing of the tribes of the earth in that day be! Think I say, and think again and again, what the dismal effects of such a sight and sound will be upon all that neglect serious preparation themselves, and scoff at them that do prepare to meet the Lord!

The design of this manual is to bring every man's gold to the touchstone and fire; I mean every man's grace to the trial of the word; that thereby we may know what we are, what we have, and what we must expect and trust to at the Lord's coming. I pretend not to any gift of *discerning spirits*; such an extraordinary gift there once was in the church, and very necessary for those times (wherein Satan was

so busy and the *canon* of scripture not completed) which the apostle calls the gift of *discerning spirits;* 1 Cor. xii. 10. And some are of opinion, that by virtue of this gift, Peter discerned the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, but whatever that gift was, it is utterly ceased now; no man can pretend to it: But the ordinary aids and assistances of the Spirit are with us still, and the lively oracles are among us still; to them we may freely go for resolution of all doubts and decision of perplexed cases. And thus we may discern our own spirits, though we want the extraordinary gift of discerning other men's spirits.

I have little to say of this *Treatise* in thy hands, more than that it is well aimed and designed, however it be managed. The ear tries words, as the mouth tasteth meat; these things will relish according to the palates it meets with.

It is not the pleasing, but profiting of men, that I have herein laboured for. I know nothing in it that is like to wound the upright, or slightly heal the hypocrite, by crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Scripture light hath been my Cynosura; and with that thread in my hand I have followed the search of hypocrisy through the labyrinths of the heart. Some assistance I hope I have had also from experience; for scripture and experience are such relatives, and the tie betwixt them so discernible, as nothing in nature can be more so. What we feel in our hearts, we might have read in the scriptures before ever we felt it.

That the blessing of God may go forth with it, and accompany it to thy soul, reader, is the heart's desire and prayer of,

Thine and the Church's

Servant in CHRIST,

JOHN FLAVEL.

THE

TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY:

OR,

THE SIGNS OF GRACE, AND SYMPTOMS OF HYPOCRISY.

Opened in a Treatise upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me GOLD TRIED *in the* FIRE, *that thou mayest be rich*, &c.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the text is opened, and the doctrines are propounded.

ALTHOUGH the Revelation be a *compendium* of intricate visions, and obscure prophecies, containing almost as many mysteries as words *; yet that cloud overshadows the prophetical part only which begins where this chapter (with the doctrinal part) ends: here the waters are found no deeper than in other places of the scripture; but if we go a little farther, they become an overflowing flood: Hitherto we touch ground, but a step further delivers us into the deeps, which are above the heads of the tallest Christians. Here the spirit speaks *doctrinally*, and perspicuously; but in the following chapters *mystically*, and in great obscurity.

Seven epistles are found in this doctrinal part, immediately dictated from heaven, and sent by John to the *seven churches of Asia*, to instruct, correct, encourage, and confirm them, as their several cases required.

My text falls in the last *epistle*, sent to the church of Laodicea; the worst and most degenerate of all the rest. The best had their defects and infirmities, but this laboured under the most dangerous disease of all. The fairest face of the seven had some *spots*, but a dangerous disease seems to have invaded the very heart of this.

Not that all were equally guilty, but the greatest part (from which the whole is denominated) *were lukewarm* professors; who had a name to live, but were dead; who being never thoroughly engaged in religion, easily embraced that principle of the Gnostics, which made it αδιαφορον, a matter of indifferency to own or deny Christ in times of persecution; the most saving doctrine that some professors are acquainted with. This lukewarm temper Christ hated; he was sick

* *Tot mysteria quot verba.* Hieron.

of them, and loathed their indifferency; "I wish (saith he, ver. 16.) "thou wert either cold or hot." An expression of the same amount with that in 1 Kings xviii. 21. "How long halt you between two "opinions?" and is manifestly translated from the qualities of water*, which is either *cold* or *hot;* or *lukewarm*, a middle temper betwixt both, and more nauseous to the stomach than either of the former. 'Cold is the complexion and natural temper of those that are wholly 'alienated and estranged from Christ and religion: *Hot*, is the gra-'cious temper of those that know and love Jesus Christ in an excel-'ling degree! *lukewarm*, or *tepid*, is the temper of those who have 'too much religion to be esteemed carnal, and too little to be truly 'spiritual;' a generation that is too *politic* to venture much, and yet so *foolish* as to lose all; they are loth to forsake truth *wholly*, and more loth to follow it too *closely:* the form of religion they affect as an *honour*, the power of it they judge a *burden.*

This is that temper which the Lord hates, and this was the disease of Laodicea, which Christ, the great and only *heart-anatomist* and *soul-physician*, discovers in ver. 17. and prescribes a cure for it in ver. 18. So that the words resolve themselves into two parts; viz.

First, A faithful discovery
Secondly, A proper remedy } of the disease of Laodicea.

1. *First*, Their disease is faithfully discovered to them, both in its symptoms, cause, and aggravations.

First, Its *symptoms*, an unconcerned, indifferent, regardless spirit in matters of religion, neither hot nor cold; the true temper of *formal-professors*, who never engaged themselves thoroughly and heartily in the ways of God, but can take or leave as times govern, and worldly interest comes to be concerned.

Secondly, Its cause and root, which is the defect and want of the truth, and power of inward grace, noted in these expressions, "Thou "art wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked; i. e. thou art destitute of a real principle, a solid work of grace. These five epithets do all point at one and the same thing; namely, the defectiveness and rottenness of their foundation. The two first, ὁ ταλαιπωρος και ὁ ἐλεεινος, *wretched* and *miserable*, are more general, concluding them in a sad condition, a very sinful and lamentable estate; the three last, πτωχος, τυφλος, και γυμνος, viz. *poor*, *blind*, and *naked*, are more particular, pointing at those grand defects and flaws in the foundation, which made their condition so wretched and miserable.

First, *Poor*, that is, † void of righteousness and true holiness before God: These are the true riches of Christians: and whosoever wants them is poor and miserable, how rich soever he be in gifts of the mind, or treasures of the earth.

* *Frigidos vocat plane a Christo alienos. Fervidos, vera Christi cognitione in excellenti gradu præditos. Tepidos, qui cum Christiani dici velint, nec causam religionis serio agunt, nec vitam confessioni conformem dignamque ducunt.* Sol. Glass. Rhet. Sacra. par. 3. p. 165.

† πτωχος *destitutus justitia, et sanctitate vera, coram Deo.* Grotius.

Secondly, *Blind;* * i. e. without spiritual illumination, and so neither knowing their disease, nor their remedy; the evil of sin, nor the necessity of Christ.

Thirdly, *Naked;* † without Christ and his righteousness. Sin is the soul's shame and nakedness; Christ's pure and perfect righteousness is its covering or garment; this they wanted, how rich soever their bodies were adorned. These were Laodiceans; i. e. a just or righteous people (according to the notation of that word) whose garments with which they covered themselves, were made of the home-spun thread of their own righteousness.

Thirdly, The disease of Laodicea is here opened to them in its aggravations; "Thou saidst I am rich, and increased with goods, and "have need of nothing; but knowest not," &c.

To be really graceless and Christless, is a miserable condition; ‡ but to be so, and yet confidently persuaded of the contrary, is most miserable: to have the very symptoms of death upon us, and yet tell those that pity us we are as well as they, is lamentable indeed!

O the efficacy of a spiritual delusion! this was their *disease, graceless ness;* and the *aggravation of it*, was their *senselessness.*

Secondly, We have a proper remedy prescribed, ver. 18. "I counsel "thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," &c. In which we have to consider, *First*, what is prescribed for the cure. *Secondly*, Where it is to be had. *Thirdly*, How to be obtained.

First, What are the remedies prescribed; and they are three; *gold, white raiment*, and *eye-salve*. First, *gold*, the cure of poverty, yea, *gold tried in the fire;* i. e. grace that hath been variously proved already; and the more it is proved, the more its truth will be conspicuous. The next is *white raiment*, the remedy against nakedness. And, lastly, *eye-salve*, the effectual cure of blindness. Under all these choice *metaphors*, more choice and excellent things are shadowed, even spiritual graces, real holiness, more precious than gold. Christ's imputed righteousness, the richest garment in all the wardrobe of heaven; and spiritual illumination, the most excellent *collyrium* or *eye-salve* that ever was, or can be applied to the mental eye or understanding of man in this world.

Secondly, Where these precious remedies may be had; and you find Christ hath the ‖ *monopoly* of them all; *Buy of me*, saith Christ in the text; he is the *repository* of all graces. Angels, ministers, ordinances cannot furnish you with them without Christ.

Thirdly, How they may be obtained from him; *Buy of me.* On

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* τυφλος *Nec morbam sciens, nec remedium*——Durham in loc.

† γυμνος *Carens justitia quæ vestitus est Christianorum.* Pareus.

‡ *Nil miserius misero non miserante seipsum.*

i. e. None is more to be pitied than a pitiable sinner who does not pity himself.

‖ *Hoc* μονοπολιον *est Christi, extra quod nulla est salus.*

this place Estius, and others, build their doctrine of merit; which is to build a superstructure of hay and stubble upon a foundation of gold. The exigence of the very text itself destroys such conceits: for what have they that are poor, wretched, miserable, and want all things, to give as a price, or by way of merit for those inestimable treasures of grace? *Buying* therefore in this place can signify or intend no more than the acquisition, compassing, or obtaining these things from Jesus Christ, in the use of such means and methods as he hath appointed; and in the use of them we merit grace no more than the *patient* merits of his *physician* by coming to him, and carefully following his prescriptions in the use of such medicaments as he freely gives him: And that place Isa. lv. 1. (from which this phrase seems to be borrowed) fully clears it; "He that hath no money, let him "come and buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

From all which, these three observations fairly offer themselves to us.

Doct. 1. *That many professors of religion are under very great and dangerous mistakes in their profession.*

Doct. 2. *That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enriches the soul that possesseth it.*

Doct. 3. *That only is to be accounted true grace which is able to endure all those trials appointed, or permitted for the discovery of it.*

The first doctrine naturally arises out of the scope of the text, which is to awaken and convince unsound professors.

The second, from the use the Holy Ghost makes of the best and choicest things in nature, to shadow forth the inestimable worth and preciousness of grace.

And the third, from that particular and most significant metaphor of gold tried in the fire; by which I here understand a real and solid work of grace, evidencing itself to be so in all the proofs and trials that are made of it; for whatsoever is probational of grace, and puts its soundness and sincerity to the test, is that to it which fire is to gold: In this sense it is used in scripture, Psal. lxvi. 10. "Thou "hast tried us as silver is tried:" And Zech. xiii. 9. "I will bring "the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is "refined, and try them as gold is tried." So that whatsoever it is which examines and tries grace whether it be sound and sincere, that is the fire Christ here speaks of; and such grace as abides these trials, is the gold here intended.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the first Doctrine is opened and proved briefly, as a preliminary Discourse to the principal Subject herein designed.

DOCT. I.

That many professors of religion are under very great and dangerous mistakes in their professions.

SECT. I.

ALL flattery is dangerous; self-flattery is more dangerous; but self-flattery in the business of salvation, is the most dangerous of all.

To pretend to the good we know we have not, is gross hypocrisy; to persuade ourselves of the good we have not, though we think we have it, is formal hypocrisy; and this was the case of those self-deceivers in the text.

My design in this discourse is not to shake the well-built hopes of any man, or beget groundless jealousies, but to discover the real dangerous flaws in the foundation of many men's hopes for heaven: Every thing is as its foundation is, and *debile fundamentum fallit opus;* that failing, all fails.

There is a twofold self-suspicion or fear in God's own people: The one is a fear of *caution*, awakening the soul to the use of all the preventive means for avoiding danger; this is *laudable:* The other a groundless suspicion of reigning hypocrisy, tending only to despondency: this is *culpable:* By the former the soul is guarded against *danger;* by the latter it is betrayed into needless trouble, and debarred from *peace.*

Good men have sometimes more fear than they ought, and wicked men have less than they ought: The former do sometimes shut their eyes against the fair evidences of their own graces; the latter shut their eyes against the sad evidences of their sin and misery. This is an evil in both, but not equally dangerous; for he that shuts his eyes against his own graces and privileges, loseth but his peace and comfort for a time; but he that shuts his eyes against the evidences of his sin and misery, loseth his precious soul to all eternity. Of this latter sort of self-deceivers the world is full, and these are the men I am concerned with in this point.

Oh! that some men had less trouble! and oh! that some had more! If the *foolish virgins* had been less confident, they had certainly been more safe, Mat. xxv. If those glorious professors in Mat. vii. 22. had not shut their eyes against their own hypocrisy, Christ had not shut against them the door of salvation and glory. Ananias and Sapphira; Hymeneus and Philetus; Alexander and Demas, with multitudes more of that sort, are the sad instances and proofs of this

point. It is said, Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation that is pure "in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Through what false spectacles do the men of that generation look upon their own souls; the men of that generation are multiplied in this generation: Never was any age over-run with a generation of vain, self-cozening, formal professors, as this generation is.

Three things I shall here endeavour to do:

1. To give evidence beyond contradiction to this sad truth, that among professors are found many self-deceivers.

(2.) To assign the true causes and reasons why it is so. And

(3.) Improve it in those practical inferences the point affords.

SECT. II.

THAT there are multitudes of such self-deceivers among professors, will appear,

1. *First*, By this, that there are every where to be found more *professors* than *converts;* unregenerate professors, whose religion is but the effect of education. Christianity, by the favour of an early providence, was the first comer, it first bespoke them for itself; these are Christians of an human creation, rather born than new-born believers. Now all these are self-deceived, and hasting to damnation, under the efficacy of a strong delusion; "for if a man think himself "to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 3. Surely our birth-privilege, without the new-birth, is nothing, yea, worse than nothing, as to our last and great account: That which stands for a great sum in our *arithmetic* it is nothing, it is but a *cypher* you see in God's. "Except a man be born "again (saith the lips of truth) he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3.

Poor self-deceivers, ponder those words of Christ; you have hitherto thought your civil education, your dead and heartless duties, enough to denominate you Christians before God; but go now, and learn what the scripture meaneth; and be assured you must experience another manner of conversion, or else it is impossible for you to escape eternal damnation.

2. *Secondly*, It is too manifest by this, that many professors are only acquainted with the externals of religion; and all their duties are no more but a compliance of the outward man with the commands of God: This is the superficial religion which deceives and betrays multitudes into eternal misery. True religion seats itself in the inward man, and acts effectually upon the vital powers, killing sin in the heart, and purging its designs and delights from carnality and selfishness; engaging the heart for God; and setting it as a bow in its full bent for him, in the approaches we make to him. But how little are many professors acquainted with these things?

Alas! if this be all we have to stand upon, how dangerous a station is it? What is external conformity but an artificial imitation of

that which only lives in the souls of good men? Thus was Jehu deceived; he did many acts of external obedience to God's command, "but Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of "Israel with all his heart," 2 Kings x. 31. And this was his overthrow.

This also was the ruin of those formalists, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. they came and sat before the Lord as his people: The word was to them as a lovely song; mightily charmed with the modulation of the prophet's voice, and his lively gestures; but all the while their hearts went after their covetousness. And what abundance of such pharisaical, superficial religion is every where to be found?

3. *Thirdly*, It appears by this, that every trial made by sufferings upon professors blows away multitudes, like dry leaves in autumn, by a stormy wind; many fall from their own stedfastness in shaking times; prosperity multiplies vain professors, and adversity purges the church of them; "Then shall many be offended," Matth. xxiv. 10.

This the scripture every where marks as a symptom of hypocrisy; Psal. lxxvii. 8. "A generation that set not their hearts aright, and "whose spirit was not stedfast with God." 1 John ii. 19. "But "they went out, that they might be made manfest, that they were "not of us." Matth. xiii. 21. "For when tribulation or persecu-"tion ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." But should one have told them in the days of their first profession, that all their zeal and labour in religion would have ended in this, it is like they would have replied as Hazael to the man of God, 2 Kings viii. 13. "But what is thy servant a dog, that he should do this "great thing?" *Quantum mutatus ab illo?*

O how unlike is their dark and dirty evening to their glorious and hopeful morning! These professors have more of the moon than of the sun, little light, less heat, but many changes: They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. During the calm what a flourish do they make? And with what gallantry do they sail? By and by you may hear *horrendas tempestates*, and soon after you may see *flenda naufragia*, dreadful shipwrecks after a furious storm; and no wonder, for they wanted that ἰδιον ϛερίγμον, that ballast and establishment in themselves that would have kept them tight and stable. 1 Pet. iii. 17.

4. *Fourthly*, It is too apparent by this, that many professors secretly indulge and shelter beloved lusts under the wings of their profession. This, like a worm at the root, will wither and kill them at last, how fragrant soever they may seem to be for a season. Gideon had seventy sons, and one bastard; but that one bastard was the death of all his seventy sons.

Some men have many excellent gifts, and perform multitudes of duties; but one secret sin indulged and allowed, will destroy them all at last. He that is partial as to the mortification of his sins, is undoubtedly *hypocritical* in his profession. If David's evidence was good

for his integrity, surely such professors will never clear themselves of hypocrisy. "I was also upright before him, and kept myself from "mine iniquity," saith he, Psalm xviii. 23. This is the right eye, and right hand which every sincere Christian must pluck out, and cut off, Matth. v. 29, 30.

Which is a metaphor from chirurgeons, whose manner it is, when the whole is in danger by any part, to cut it off, *ne pars sincera trahatur;* lest all perish.

Their suppressing some lust raiseth their confidence; the indulging of one raiseth the foundation of their hopes; and thus they deceive themselves.

5. *Fifthly*, This also manifests the self-deceits of many professors, that the secret duties of religion, or at least the secret intercourse of the soul with God in them, is a secret hid from the knowledge and experience of many professors.

To attend the ordinances of God in the seasons of them, they know; to pray in their families at the stated hours thereof, they know; but to retire from all the world into their closets, and there to pour out their hearts before the Lord, they know not.

To feel somewhat within, paining them like an empty, hungry stomach, until they have eaten that hidden manna, that bread in secret; I mean refreshed their souls with real communion with the Lord there; this is a mystery locked up from the acquaintance of many that call themselves Christians; and yet this is made a characteristical note of a sincere Christian by Christ himself, in Matth. vi. 6.

O reader! if thy heart were right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loth thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to: *Non est religio ubi omnia patent;* religion doth not lay all open to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit, but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of an heathen about his secret correspondence with his friends, what need the world be acquainted with it? "Thou and I are theatre enough to each other." There are inclosed pleasures in religion which none but renewed souls do feelingly understand.

6 *Lastly*, How many more profess religion in these days, than ever made religion their business! Philosophy tells us, there is a το εργον and a το παρεργον, a main business; and a by-business: the same is found in religion also.

There are "that give themselves to the Lord," 2 Cor. viii. 5. whose conversation, or trade, is in heaven, Phil. iii. 18. the end or scope of whose life is Christ, Heb. xiii. 7, 8. who give religion the precedency both in time and affection, Psalm v. 3. Rom. xii. 11. who are constant and indefatigable in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

And there are also that take up religion rather for ostentation than for an occupation, who never mind the duties of religion, but when

they have nothing else to do; and when their outward man is engaged in the duties of it, yet their heart is not in it; they hear, they pray, ηδε ψυχη εξω, as Chrysostom speaks, but their souls, their thoughts and minds are abroad. It is not their business to have fellowship with God in duties, to get their lusts mortified, their hearts tried, their souls conformed to the image of God in holiness.

They pray as if they prayed not, and hear as if they heard not; and if they feel no power in ordinances, no quickening in duties, it is no disappointment at all to them; for these were not their designs in drawing nigh to God in these appointments.

And thus you see what numbers of professors deceive themselves.

SECT. III.

AND if we seriously enquire into the grounds and causes of this self-deceit among professors, we shall find these four things conspiring to delude and cheat them in the great concern of their salvation.

1. *First*, The natural deceitfulness of the heart, than which nothing is more treacherous, and false, Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;"* עקב מכל הלב *Supplantativum cor, præ omnibus;* the heart is the greatest supplanter, the most crafty and subtle cheat of all, that deceives us, as Jacob did his brother (to whose name this text alludes.) It defeats us of our heavenly heritage, as Jacob supplanted him in his earthly one, while we are gone a hunting after earthly trifles. And wherein its deceitfulness principally appears, you may see by the solemn caveat of the apostle, James i. 22. wherein he warns us to beware, that in hearing the word we deceive not ourselves by false reasonings; for so παραλογιζομενοι εαυτες imports, and may be strictly rendered, false reasoning themselves, namely, by making false syllogisms; whereby they misconclude about their spiritual and eternal estate and condition, and befool themselves.

The time will come when a man's own heart will be found to have the chief hand in his ruin; and what Apollodorus did but fancy his heart said to him, some men's hearts will tell them in earnest, when they come to the place of misery and torment; εγω σοι τουτων αιτια, I have been the cause of all these, I have betrayed thee into all these torments: it was my laziness, my credulity, my averseness to the ways of strict godliness, mortification and self-denial which have forever undone thee; when thou sattest under the convincing truths of the gospel, it was I that whispered those atheistical surmises into thine ear, persuading thee that all thou heardest was but the intemperate heat of an hot-brained zealot; when the judgments of God were denounced, and the misery thou now feelest forewarned and threaten-

* Ar. Mont.

ed, it was I that whispered what the tongue of another once spake out, *Tunc credam, cum illuc venero:* I will believe it when I come thither.

Surely this is a great truth which was observed by the wisest of men, "He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. And thousands of such fools are to be found among professors.

2. *Secondly*, Satan is a chief conspirator in this treacherous design; *we are not ignorant* (saith the apostle) *of his devices;* νοηματα, his sophistry and slights, 2 Cor. ii. 11. his μεθοδιας, trains and methods of temptation, which are thoroughly studied and artificially moulded and ordered; even such systems as *tutors* and *professors* of *arts* and *sciences* have, and read over to their *auditors;* as * one judiciously observes, to be the import of that text, Eph. vi. 11. Nor is it to be wondered at, considering his vast knowledge, deep malice, and long experience in this art of cheating, together with the great corruption and proneness of the hearts of men to close with his devices, and believe his impostures, that so vast a number of souls are taken "captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

It is the god of this world that blinds the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "The god of this world," (so called by a Mimesis) who leads a world of poor deluded wretches to destruction, having first *blinded their minds*, that is, deluded, and with his hellish art practised upon their understanding, that το ηγεμονικον, leading and directive faculty, which is to the soul what eyes are to the body.

I remember Basil brings in Satan thus insulting Christ: I have them! I have them! for all thy blood and miracles, thy wooings and beseechings, thy knockings and strivings, I have cozened thee of them at the very gates of heaven: for all their illuminations, and tasting of the powers of the world to come, I have shipwrecked them in the very mouth of the haven.

3. *Thirdly*, The common works found in unregenerate souls deceive many, who cannot distinguish them from the special works of the Spirit in God's elect; see that startling scripture, Heb. vi. 4. where you find, among the common operations of the Spirit upon apostates, that illumination which gives perspicuity to their minds in discerning spiritual truths, and that frequently with more distinctness and depth of judgment than some gracious souls attain unto; besides, it is the matter out of which many rare and excellent gifts are formed in admirable variety, which are singularly useful to others, as they are exercised in expounding the scriptures, defending the truths of Christ by solid arguments, preaching, praying, &c. and make the subject of them renowned and honoured in the church of God, whilst mean time, they are dazzled with their own splendour, and fatally ruined by them.

There you find also tasting as well as enlightening: so that they

* Dr. Goodwin's Child of light.

seem to abound not only in knowledge, but in sense also; i. e. in some kind of *experience* of what they know: for experience is the bringing of things to the test of spiritual sense. They do taste or experience the good that comes by the promises of the word, and discoveries of heaven and glory, though they feel not experimentally the transforming efficacy of these things upon their own souls.

Now, that illumination furnishing them with excellent gifts (as before was noted), enabling them to assent to gospel-truths, which the scripture calls faith, Acts viii. 12. and working in them conviction of sin, 1 Sam. xv. 24. reformation of life, 2 Pet. ii. 20. and touching their affections also with transient joy in the discovery of those truths.

And this taste, which comes so near to the experience, which the sanctified soul enjoys, seems to put their condition beyond all controversy, and lay a foundation for their ill-built confidence: nothing is more apt to beget and nourish such a confidence than the meltings and workings of our affections about spiritual things; for as a * grave divine hath well observed, such a man seems to have all that is required of a Christian, and to have attained the very end of all knowledge, which is operation and influence upon the affections. When they shall find heat in their affections, as well as light in their minds, how apt are they to say (as these self-deceivers in the text did) they "are rich, and have need of nothing." Now of all the false signs of grace by which men cozen themselves, none are so dangerous and destructive to souls as those that come nearest true ones: never doth Satan more effectually and securely manage his cheats than when he is transformed into an angel of light.

Among this sort of self-deceivers, how many gifted men, and, among that sort, some employed in the office of the ministry will be found, whose daily employment being about spiritual things, studying, preaching, praying, &c. do conclude themselves sanctified persons, because they are conversant about sacred employments, as if the subject must be, because the object is sacred. O! that such would seriously ponder these two scriptures, Matth. vii. 22. "Many "will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied "in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy "name done many wonderful things?" And 1 Cor. ix. 27.—"lest "that by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself "should be a cast-away."

4. *Lastly*, To add no more, this strengthens self-deceit exceedingly in many, viz. Their observations of, and comparing themselves with others. Thus the Pharisees (those gross self-deceivers) "trust-"ed in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others," Luke xviii. 9. Their low rating of others gave them that high rate and value of themselves. And thus the proverb is made good,

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* Mr. A. Burgess.

Regnat luscus inter cæcos; he that hath but one eye is a king among the blind.

Thus the false apostles cheated and befooled themselves, 2 Cor. x. 12. "But they measuring themselves by themselves, and com- "paring themselves among themselves, are not wise." God hath not made one man a measure or standard to another man, but his word is the common beam or scale to try all men.

These men are as sharp-sighted to note other men's evils as their own excellencies; to eye the miscarriages of others with derision, and their own performances with admiration.

They bless themselves when they behold the profane in their im- "pieties, Luke xviii. 11. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other "men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican;" q. d. O what a saint am I in comparison of these miscreants! the Pharisee's religion you see runs all upon *nots;* a negative holiness is enough to him: and the measure he takes of it is by comparison of himself with others more externally vile than himself. A Christian may say with praise and humility, "I am not as some men are; but "though he knows nothing by himself, yet is he not thereby justi- "fied," 1 Cor. iv. 4. He neither rakes together the enormities of the vilest, nor the infirmities of the holiest, to justify and applaud himself as these self-deceivers do. And these are the causes and occasions of that general deception, under which so great a part of the professing world bow down and perish.

SECT. IV.

3. IN the last place I shall improve this point variously, according to the importance and usefulness of it, with as much brevity and closeness of application as I can. And,

Use 1. Shall be for caution to professors. Before I tell you what use you should make of it, I must tell you what use you may not make of it.

First, Do not make this use of it; to conclude from what hath been said, that all professors are but a pack of hypocrites, and that there is no truth nor integrity in any man: this is both intolerable arrogance to ascend the throne of God; and unparalleled uncharitableness, to judge the hearts of all men.

Some men are as apt to conclude others to be hypocrites, by measuring their hearts by their own, as others are to conclude themselves saints, by comparing their own excellencies with other men's corruptions: but, blessed be God! there is some grain among the heap of chaff, some true diamonds among the counterfeit stones: the devil hath not the whole piece; a remnant, according to election, belongs really to the Lord.

Secondly, Do not make this use of it, that assurance must needs be impossible, because so many professors are found to be self-deceivers.

That assurance is one of the great difficulties in religion, is a great truth; but that it is therefore unattainable in this world, is very false. Popish doctrine indeed makes it impossible; but that doctrine is practicably confuted in the comfortable experience of many souls: all are commanded to strive for it, 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all "diligence to make your calling and election sure:" and some have the happiness to obtain it, 2 Tim. i. 12. "For I know whom I "have believed: and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that "which I have committed unto him against that day.

Let the similar works upon hypocrites resemble as much as they will the saving works of the Spirit upon believers; yet God doth always, and the saints do sometimes plainly discern the difference.

Thirdly, Do not make this use of it, to conceal or hide the truths or graces of God, or to refuse to profess, or confess them before men, because many professors deceive themselves and others also, by a vain profession: Because another professeth what he hath not, must you therefore hide or deny what you have? It is true, the possession of grace and truth in your own souls, is that which saves you; but the profession or confession of it, is that which honours God, and edifies; yea, sometimes is the instrument to save others; it is your comfort that you feel it, it is others comfort to know that you do so. Ostentation is your sin, but a serious and humble profession is your duty, Rom. x. 9.

SECT. V.

Use 2. HAVING shewed you in the former section what use you ought not to make of this doctrine, I will next shew you what use you ought to make of it; and surely you cannot improve this point to a better purpose than from it to take warning, and look to yourselves, that you be not of that number who deceive themselves in their profession. If this be so, suffer me closely to press that great apostolical caution, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinks he stands, "take heed lest he fall." O professors! look carefully to your foundation; be not high-minded, but fear. You have, it may be, done and suffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and sweet comforts: a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: All this may be right, (for ought I, or, it may be, you know:) but yet it is possible it may be false also: You have sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again in his more equal balance, and should say, *Mene Tekel*, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting: What a confounded man wilt thou be under such a sentence! *Quæ splendent in conspectu hominis, sordent in conspectu Judicis:* Things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God: he seeth not as man seeth.

Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it; yea, it may be false, and thou strongly confident of its integrity.

The saints may approve thee, and God condemn thee; Rev. iii. 1. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead." Men may say, there is a true Nathaniel; and God may say, there is a self-cozening Pharisee.

Reader, thou hast heard of Judas and Demas; of Ananias and Sapphira; of Hymeneus and Philetus; once renowned and famous professors, and thou hast heard what they proved at last.

Take heed their case be not thine own; do they not all, as it were with one mouth cry to thee, O professor! if thou wilt not come where we are, do not cozen thyself as we did; if thou expectest a better place and lot, be sure thou get a sincere heart: Had we been more self-suspicious, we had been more safe.

I would not scare you with needless jealousies, but I would fain prevent fatal mistakes. Do not you find your hearts deceitful in many things? Do not you shuffle over secret duties? Do not you censure the same evils in others, which you scarce reprove in yourselves? Are there not many by-ends in duties? Do not you find you are far less affected with a great deal of service and honour done to God by others, than with a little by yourselves?

Is it not hard to look upon other men's excellencies without envy, or upon your own without pride?

And are you not troubled with a busy devil, as well as with a bad heart? Hath not he that circuits the whole world, observed you? Hath he not studied your constitution sins, and found out that sin which most easily besets you? Hath he less malice against your souls than others? Surely you are in the very thicket of temptations; thousands of snares are round about you. O how difficultly are the righteous saved! How hard to be upright! How few even of the professing world win heaven at last!

O therefore search your hearts, professors, and let this caution go down to your very reins; "Let him that thinks he stands, take "heed lest he fall."

Away with rash uncharitable censures of others, and be more just and severe in censuring yourselves. Away with dry and unprofitable controversies, and spend your thoughts upon this great question, Am I sound, or am I rotten at heart? Am I a new creature, or the old creature still in a new creature's dress and habit? Beg the Lord that you be not deceived in that great point (your integrity) whatever you may be mistaken in. Pray that you be not given up to an heedless, careless, and vain spirit, and then have religious duties for a rattle, to still and quiet your consciences.

Surely that ground work can never be laid too sure, upon which so great a stress as thy soul and eternity must depend. It will not repent thee, I dare promise, when thou comest to die, that thou hast employed thy time and strength to this end: Whilst others are panting

after the dust of the earth, and saying, Who will shew us any good? be thou panting after the assurance of the love of God, and crying, Who will shew me how to make my calling and election sure?

O deceive not yourselves with names and notions? Think not, because you are for a stricter way of worship, or because you associate with, and are accordingly denominated, one of the more reformed professors, that therefore you are safe enough: Alas! how small an interest have titles, modes, and denominations in religion? Suppose a curious artist take a lump of lead and refine it, and cast it into the mould, whence it comes forth shining, and bearing some noble figure, suppose of an eagle; yet it is but a leaden eagle. Suppose the figure of a man, and that in the most exact lineaments and proportions; yet still it is but a leaden man: Nay, let it bear the figure of an angel, it is but a leaden angel: For the base and ignoble matter is the same it was, though the figure be not. Even so, take an unregenerate, carnal man, let his life be reformed, and his tongue refined, and call him a zealous Conformist, or a strict Non-conformist; call him a Presbyterian, an Independent, or what you will; he is all the while but a carnal Conformist, or Non-conformist; an unregenerate Presbyterian, a carnal Independent; for the nature is still the same, though the stamp and figure his profession gives him be not the same.

O my friends! believe it, fine names and brave words are of little value with God: God will no more spare you for these, than Samuel did Agag for his delicate ornaments, and spruce appearance: Either make sure the root of the matter, or the leaves of a vain profession will not long cover you.

To be deceived by another is bad enough; but to deceive ourselves is a thousand times worse.

To deceive ourselves in truths of the superstructure, is bad; and they that do so shall suffer loss, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But to deceive ourselves in the foundation, is a desperate deceit, and shipwrecks all our hopes and happiness at once.

If any one lose his money by a cheat, it troubles him; but to lose his soul by a cheat, will confound him. If a man lose an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, yet *omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, as Chrysostom speaks; God hath given these members double, so that there is another left; *animam vero unam:* But the soul is one, and only one; and if that be damned, you have not another to be saved.

O therefore be restless till it be, and till you know it be, out of eternal danger!

SECT. VI.

Use 3. IN conclusion: If so many professors of religion be cheated in their profession, let all that are well satisfied and assured of their integrity, bless the Lord whilst they live for that mercy. O it is a mercy that no unsanctified soul can have: yea, and it is a mercy that many gracious souls cannot obtain, though they seek it

with tears, and would part with all the pleasant things they have in the world to enjoy it.

This is that mercy that gives souls the highest pleasure this world is acquainted with, or the state of this mortality can bear; for let the well-assured soul but consider what it is assured of, Christ, with the purchases of his blood. O what is this! "I am my beloved's, and "my beloved is mine," Cant. ii. 16. What a vital, ravishing, overpowering efficacy is in that voice of faith! let it but look back a few years, and compare what it was with what it is now; it was far off, it is now made nigh, Eph. ii. 12, 13. It was not beloved, but is now beloved, Rom. ix. 25, 26. It had not obtained mercy, but now hath obtained mercy, 1 Pet. ii. 10. Or let the assured soul look forward, and compare what it now is, and hath, with what it shortly shall be made, and put in possession of: "Beloved, (saith the apos-"tle) now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what "we shall be: But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be "like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

I say, let the assured soul but steep its thoughts, by meditation, in these subjects, and it will be impossible to keep him from the most agreeable transports of joy and delight.

O what a life have you in comparison of other men? Some have two hells, one present, another coming; you have two heavens, one in hand, the other in hope. Some of your own brethren in Christ, that have been, it may be, many years panting after assurance, are still denied it; but God hath indulged so peculiar a favour to you. Bless ye the Lord, and make his praise glorious.

CHAP. III.

Containing the use and improvement of

DOCT. II.

That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enricheth the soul that hath it: It is Christ's gold.

SECT. I.

THE Lord Jesus here chuseth the most pure, precious, resplendent, durable, and valuable thing, in all the treasures and magazines of nature, to shadow forth saving grace, which is infinitely more excellent: Certainly that must be the best thing which the best things in nature can but imperfectly shadow forth. What was the golden oil emptied through the two golden pipes, Zech. iv. 12. but the precious graces of God, flowing through Christ into all his members: Gold is precious; but one drachm of saving grace is more

precious than all the gold of Ophir: "It cannot be gotten for gold, "neither shall silver be weighed for a price thereof," Job xxviii. 15. Surely gold and silver, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies, are not worth the mentioning, when saving grace is once mentioned. For consider it,

1. *First*, In its cause and fountain from whence it flows, and you shall find it to be the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. who, upon that account, is called *the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. x. 29. It derives its original from the Most High; it is spirit born of Spirit, John iii. 6. All the rules of morality, all human diligence and industry can never produce one gracious habit or act alone; 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that "we are sufficient of ourselves," &c.

Nay, we speak not becoming the incomparable worth of grace, when we say, it is the fruit and birth of the Spirit; for so are common gifts also. There are several emanations from this sun, divers streams from this fountain; but of all his operations and productions, this of saving grace is the most noble and excellent. Gifts are from the Spirit as well as grace, but grace is more excellent than the best gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 31. "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and "yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." Hence you read in Phil. i. 10. "Of things that are excellent," or as the original, τα διαφεροντα, might be rendered, things that differ, namely, in respect of excellency, not as good and evil, but as less good and more good differ. Gifts have their value and preciousness, but the best gifts differ as much from grace, as brass from gold, though both be generated by the influence of the same sun. Gifts (as one saith) are dead graces, but graces are living gifts; it is the most excellent production of the highest and most excellent cause.

2. *Secondly*, Consider it in its nature, and you will find it divine, 2 Pet. i. 4. "Partakers of the Divine nature," viz. in our sanctification; not that it gives us the properties of the Divine nature; they are incommunicable; but the similitude and resemblance of it is stamped upon our souls in the work of grace.

"The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him "that created him," Col. iii. 10. The schoolmen, and some of the fathers, place this image or resemblance of God, in the natural faculties of the soul, viz. the understanding, memory, and will: which is an umbrage of a trinity in unity; but it rather consists in the renovation of the faculties by grace; for in this we bear the Divine image upon our souls, and that image or resemblance of God in holiness is the beauty and honour of our souls.

It is their beauty: "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, "for delights!" saith Christ of his people, Cant. vii. 6. Natural beauty consists in the *symmetry* and comely proportion of parts each with the other; spiritual beauty in the harmony or agreeableness of our souls to God; and as it is our chiefest beauty, so certainly it is our highest honour; for it gives us access unto God, who is the

fountain of honour and glory; and this makes the righteous more excellent than his neighbour; let his neighbour be what he will, though the blood of nobles run in his veins, the righteous is more excellent than he, except saving grace be also diffused in his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, Consider it in its recipient subject, and you will find its value still to increase; for the precious oil of saving-grace is never poured into any other than an elect vessel.

Hence faith, one branch of sanctification is, with respect to its subject, stiled *The faith of God's elect*, Tit. i. 1. Whosoever finds true grace in his soul, may (during the evidence thereof) from it strongly conclude his election, looking backward, and his salvation, looking forward, Rom. viii. 30. It marks and seals the person in whom it is, for glory, "God hath set apart him that is godly for "himself," Psal. iv. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, View the precious worth of grace in its excellent effects and influences upon the soul in which it inheres.

(1.) It adorns with incomparable ornaments, which are of great price in the sight of God, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Yea, it reflects such beams of glory in the soul where its seat is, that Christ himself, the author, is also the admirer of it; Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished my heart, "my sister, my spouse! thou hast ravished my heart with one of "thine eyes, with one of the chains of thy neck!" and as one overcome with its excelling beauty, he saith, "Turn away thine eyes "from me, for they have overcome me," Cant. vi. 5.

(2.) It elevates and ennobles a man's spirit beyond all other principles in man; it sets the heart and affections upon heaven, and takes them up with the glory of the invisible world, Phil. iii. 20. "But "our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Sa-"viour." Whilst others are trading for corn and wine, for sheep and oxen, for feathers and trifles, the gracious soul is trading with God for pardon and peace, for righteousness and life, for glory and immortality: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with "his Son Jesus Christ," John i. 3.

(3.) It doth not only raise the spirit by conversing with God, and things above, but transforms the soul, by that converse into the likeness of those heavenly objects it converses with: "It changes them "into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that though the sanctified man still remains the *who he was*, yet not the *what he was* before; the very temper of his Spirit is altered.

(4.) It doth not only transform the soul in which it is is, but preserves the subject in which it is: it is a singular preservative from sin; so that though sin be in them still, and works in them still, yet it cannot prevail in them still to fulfil the lusts of it, as it was wont to do, Gal. v. 17. Sin conceives, but cannot bring forth fruit unto death; this gives a miscarrying womb.

(5.) It doth not only preserve it from sin, but grace establisheth the soul, in whom it is, far beyond any other arguments without, or any

other principles within a man. "It is a good thing that the heart "be established with grace," Heb. xiii. 9. This is that which the apostle calls our own stedfastness, or that ballast we have within ourselves; which keeps us right and stable. O the excellency of grace!

(6.) To conclude; it is the root of all that precious fruit which we bring forth to God in this world: it is the root of every gracious word in our lips, and of every gracious work in our hands; be the matter of our gracious thoughts never so excellent, the matter of our heavenly discourses and prayers never so sweet, still grace is the root of the matter, Job xix. 28. O then, what a precious thing is grace.

5. *Fifthly*, View it in its properties, and you will soon discover its transcendent excellencies: the richest epithets are no hyperboles here; we seek not beyond the value of it, when we call it supernatural grace, for so it is: it comes down from above, from the Father of lights, Jam. i. 7. Nature can never be improved to that height, how much soever its admirers boast of it; nor do we strain too high when we call it immortal grace; for so hath God made it. This is that water which springs up in the sanctified soul unto eternal life, John iv. 14. It will not die when thou diest, but ascend with the soul from which it is inseparable, and be received up with it into glory, Rom. viii. 10. You may outlive your friends; you may outlive your gifts; but you cannot outlive your graces.

Shall I say it is the most sweet and comfortable thing that ever the soul was acquainted with in this world, next Jesus Christ, the author and fountain of it. Sure, if so I speak, I have as many witnesses to attest it, as there be gracious souls in the world: nothing is more comfortable than grace, except Christ; and yet without grace no soul can feel the comforts of Christ in the troubles of life, or in the straits of death. This is a spring of comfort!

6. *Sixthly*, Consider it in its design and scope; and you will still discern more and more of its precious excellency: for what is the aim and end of God in the infusions and improvements of grace, but to attemper and mould our spirits by it into a meetness and fitness for the enjoyment of himself in the world to come? Col. i. 12. "Giving "thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers "of the inheritance of the saints in light." Compare this with 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing "is God."

O blessed design! how precious must that work be, which is wrought for so high and glorious a purpose as this is? No work more excellent, no end more noble.

7. *Seventhly*, Consider the means and instruments, both principal and subordinate, employed in this work: many blessed instruments are set on work to beget, conserve, and improve it in our souls; and these all speak the precious worth of it. No wise man will dig for a

base and worthless metal with golden mattocks. The blood of Christ was shed to procure it, Heb. xiii. 12.

The Spirit of God is sent forth to form and create it; for it is his own workmanship, Eph. ii. 10. his fruit, Gal. v. 22.

The ordinances and officers of the gospel were at first instituted, and ever since continued in the church, for this work's sake, John xvii. 17. and Eph. iv. 12. It is the fruit of Christ's blood; yea, and it hath cost the sweat and blood of the dispensers of the gospel too.

Nay, all the works of providence look this way, and aim at this thing, Rom. viii. 28. What is the errand of all God's rods but to make us partakers of his holiness? Heb. xii. 10.

8. *Eighthly*, The high value that the most high God sets upon grace, shews it to be an excellent thing indeed: "It is of great price "in his sight," 1 Pet. iii. 4. no service finds acceptation with God, but what is performed by grace: None but sanctified vessels are meet for the master's use, "The end of the commandment is charity out "of a pure heart," 1 Tim. i. 5.

The weakest performances of grace find acceptance with him, though clogged with many sinful weaknesses and infirmities, Heb. xi. 31, 32. If God so prize it, well may we: He that made the jewel best understands the value of it.

9. *Ninthly*, The hypocritical pretences made to it all over the professing world, shew what a most precious and desirable thing it is: If there were not some singular glory in it, why doth every one covet to be reputed gracious? Nay, the devil himself baits many of his hooks of temptation with a show of grace; for he knows sin hath no native beauty of its own to entice, and therefore he borrows the paint and pretence of holiness to cover it: but oh! what a dilemma will the hypocrite be posed with at last? And how can he answer it when God shall demand,

If grace were evil, why didst thou affect the name and reputation of it? And if it were good, why didst thou satisfy thyself with the empty name and shadow of it only?

10. *Tenthly*, To conclude: the incomparable esteem that all good men have for it, shews it to be a thing of inestimable price.

Grace is the sum of all their prayers, the scope of all their endeavours, the matter of their chief joy, the reward of their afflictions and sufferings; their chief joys and sorrows, hopes and fears in this world, are taken up about it. By all which it appears that its price is above rubies; and all the gold and silver in the world are but dung and dross in comparison with it.

SECT. II.

CONTAINING six practical inferences from this precious truth.

Infer. 1. Is saving grace more precious than gold? *Let them that have it, bless God for it and not boast.* Men's hearts are apt to puff up and swell with spiritual, as with material gold: It is hard to be an

owner of much of this gold, and not be lifted up with it. To keep down thy heart, and preserve thine eyes from being dazzled with these thy gracious excellencies, it will be needful for thee, Christian, sometimes to consider,

That although grace be one of the most excellent things that ever God created, yet it is *but a creature*, a dependent thing, 1 Cor. v. 17.

Yea, it is not only a creature, but a very imperfect creature yet in thy soul, labouring under many weaknesses, Phil. iii. 12. and sometimes ready to die, Rev. iii. 2.

Though it can do many things for you, yet it cannot justify you before God: You cannot make a garment of it to cover your guilt, nor plead the dignity of it at God's bar for your discharge: It is not your inherent, but Christ's imputed righteousness must do that for you, though in other respects it be very necessary.

Nay, remember how excellent soever it be, it is not the native growth and product of your hearts; all the grace you have is foreign to your natures; and what you have is received, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

And lastly, remember he that is most proud and conceited of his own graces will be found to be the owner of least grace, and hath most cause to question whether he hath any or none. It is the nature of grace to humble, abase, and empty the soul; and it is the strength of our corruptions which thus puffs us up with vain conceits.

Infer. 2. Is saving grace more excellent than gold? *What cause then have the poorest Christians to be well satisfied with their lot?* To others God hath given Ishmael's portion, the fatness of the earth; to you, Isaac's, the graces of the covenant: Their portion is paid in brass, yours in gold. Many of you are poor in the world, but "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised," Jam. ii. 5. What is the dust of the earth to the fruits of the Spirit? You are troubled that you have no more of the world: It may be if you had more gold, you would have less grace. You consider not how many are poor and wretched in both worlds, moneyless and Christless too: You do not consider you are near come to that state in which all your wants will be fully supplied; where you shall not need the treasures of the earth, and have your desires satisfied out of the treasures of grace and glory.

Infer. 3. Is saving grace gold? yea, infinitely more precious than gold? *Then surely declining Christians are great losers, and have cause to be great mourners.* The remission of the least degree of grace is more to be lamented than the loss of the greatest sum of gold.

Though the habits of grace be not lost, yet the acts of grace may be suspended, 2 Sam. xii. 31. The degrees of grace may be remitted, Rev. iii. 3. The evidences of grace may be clouded, and consequently the comforts of grace may be suspended, Isa. l. 10. and the least of these is such a loss, as all the treasures of the earth cannot repair.

Well therefore may declining Christians challenge the first place among all the mourners in this world.

Infer. 4. Is grace so invaluably precious? *How precious then ought the ordinances of God be to our souls, by which grace is first communicated, and afterwards improved in our souls!* "The law of "thy mouth is better unto me, than thousands of gold and silver," Psal. cxix. 72. and good reason, whilst it imparts and improves that to which gold and silver are but dross and dung.

None but these that value not grace will ever slight the means, or despise and injure the instruments thereof. It is a sad sign of a graceless world when these precious things fall under contempts and slights.

Infer. 5. If grace be so precious, how watchful should all gracious persons be in the days of temptation! The design of temptation is to rob you of your treasure: When cut-purses get into the crowd, we use to say, Friends, look to your purses. How many brave Christians have we read and heard of, that have rather chosen to part with their lives than with their graces, who have "resisted unto blood, "striving against sin?" Heb. xii. 4.

O Christians! you live in a cheating age; many seeming Christians have lost all, and many real Christians have lost much; so much, that they are like to see but little comfort in this world; who are like to go mourning to the grave with that lamentation, Job xxix. 2, 3. "O that it were with me as in times past!"

Inf. 6. To conclude: Is there such precious worth in saving grace? *Then bless God for, and diligently use all means to increase and improve it in your souls.* It is gold for preciousness, and for usefulness, and must not be laid up in a napkin: That is a sin condemned by the very scope of that parable, Mat. xxv. 14, 15, &c.

All Christians indeed have not the same advantages of improvement; but all must improve it according to the advantages they have, in order to an account. Reserved Christians, who live too abstracted from the society and communion of others, and disperse not their streams abroad to the benefit of others, nor improve the graces of others for their own benefit, are wanting both to their own duty and comfort. See you a man rich in grace, O trade with him if you can to improve yourselves by him; and the rather, because you know not how soon death may snatch him from you, and with him all his stock of grace is gone from you too, except what you made your own whilst you conversed with him: But alas! instead of holy, profitable, soul-improving communion, some are sullenly reserved; some are negligent and lazy; some are litigious and wrangling; more apt to draw forth the dross than the gold; I mean the corruptions, than graces of others. And how few there be that drive a profitable trade for increase of grace, is sad to consider.

And as grace is not improved by communion with men, so I doubt most Christians thrive but little in their communion with God: We

are too seldom in our closets, too little upon our knees; and when we are there, we gain but little; we come not off such gainers by duty as we might. O Christians! think when you are hearing and praying, I am now trading with heaven for that which is infinitely better than gold. God is rich to all that call upon him: What a treasure may I get this hour, if the fault be not in mine own heart? And thus of the second observation.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein the third doctrine, being the main subject of this treatise, is opened, and the method of the whole discourse stated.

DOCT. III.

That only is to be accounted true grace, which is able to endure all those trials appointed or permitted for the discovery of it.

SECT. I.

THE most wise God hath seen it fit to set all his people in a state of trial in this world. First, he tries, and then he crowns them; James i. 12. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, πειρασμον, "i. e. [probation or trial;] for when he is tried, he shall receive "the crown of life," &c.

No man can say what he is; whether his graces be true or false, till they be tried and examined by those things which are to them as fire is to gold. These self-deceivers in the text, thought they had grace; yea, they thought they had been rich in grace; but it proved no better than dross: And therefore Christ here counsels them to buy of him gold tried in the fire; i. e. true grace indeed, which appears to be so upon the various proofs and examinations of its sincerity, which are to be made in this world, as well as in the great solemn trial it must come to in the world to come.

The scripture speaks of a twofold trial, viz.

A trial of men's { Opinions, and Graces.

1. *First*, The opinions and judgments of men are tried as by fire; in which sense we are to understand that place, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, pre-"cious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made "manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed "by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."

This text speaks of such persons as held the foundation of Christianity, but yet superstructed such doctrines and practices as were no more able to endure the trial, than hay, wood, or stubble, can

endure the fire.* Such a person hereby brings himself to danger: and though the apostle will not deny the possibility, yet he asserts the difficulty of his salvation; "He shall be saved, yet so as by fire †;" i. e. as a man is saved by leaping out of his house at midnight, when it is all on fire about his ears; for so that phrase imports, Amos iv. 11. and Jude 23. Glad to escape naked, and with the loss of his goods; blessing God he hath his life for a prey: As little regard shall such have to their erroneous notions and unscriptural opinions at last.

2. *Secondly*, The graces of men are brought to the test, as well as their opinions. Trial will be made of their hearts, as well as of their heads; and upon this trial the everlasting safety and happiness of the person depends. If a man's opinions be some of them found hay or stubble, yet so long as he holds the head, and is right in the foundation, he may be saved; but if a man's supposed graces be found so, all the world cannot save him: There is no way of escape, if he finally deceive himself herein. And of this trial of graces my text speaks: Sincere grace is gold tried by fire.

There is a twofold trial of grace; active and passive.

First, An active trial of it, in which we try it ourselves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Examine yourselves; prove yourselves;" i. e. measure your hearts, duties and graces, by the rule of the word: see how they answer to that rule: Bring your hearts and the word together by solemn self-examination; confer with your reins, and commune with your own hearts.

Secondly, A passive trial of it: whether we try it or no, God will try it, he will bring our gold to the touchstone, and to the fire. "Thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen me, and tried mine "heart towards thee," saith the prophet, Jer. xii. 3.

Sometimes he tries the strength and ability of his servants graces; and thus he tried Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. And sometimes he tries the soundness and sincerity of our graces; so the *Ephesian angel* was tried, and found dross, Rev. ii. 2. And so Job was tried, and found true gold, Job xxiii. 10. These trials are not made by God for his own information; for he knows what is in man; his eyes pierce the heart and reins; but for our information; which is the true sense of Deut. viii. 2. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord "thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble "thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart;" i. e. to make thee know it, by giving thee such experiments and trials of it in those wilderness straits and difficulties.

And these are the trials of grace I am here to speak of, not excluding the active trials made by ourselves; no, no, all these trials

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* Upon a thorough trial they vanish into smoke.

† From which judgment he shall escape just as one does naked, or only with his life, out of the midst of flames. *Chrysostom.*

made by God upon us, are designed to put us upon the trial of ourselves: When God tries, we should try too.

Now the method into which I shall cast this discourse, shall be to shew you,

1. *First*, What those things are which try the sincerity of our graces, as fire tries gold.

2. *Secondly*, For what ends doth God put the graces of his people upon such trials in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, That such grace only is sincere as can endure these trials.

4. *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, To apply the whole in the main uses of it.

SECT. II.

1. First, *WHAT those things are which try the sincerity of grace, as fire tries gold.*

Before I enter into particulars, it will be needful to acquaint you, that the subject before me is full of difficulties. There is need, as one speaks, of much cautious respect to the various sizes and degrees of growth among Christians, and the vicissitudes of their inward cases; else we may darken and perplex the way, instead of clearing it.

The portraiture of a Christian is such as none can draw to one model, but with respect to the infancy of some, as well as the age and strength of others.

Great heed ought also to be had in the application of marks and signs; we should first try them; before we try ourselves or others by them. Marks and signs are by some distinguished into exclusive, inclusive, and positive: Exclusive marks serve to shut out bold pretenders, by shewing them how far they come short of a saving work of grace; and they are commonly taken from some necessary common duty, as hearing, praying, &c. He that hath not these things, cannot have any work of grace in him; and yet if he do them, he cannot from thence conclude his estate to be gracious: He that so concludes, he deceives himself.

Inclusive marks rather discover the degrees than the truth of grace, and are rather intended for comfort than for conviction: If we find them in ourselves, we do not only find sincerity, but eminency of grace; They being taken from some raised degree and eminent acts of grace in confirmed and grown Christians.

Betwixt the two former there is a middle sort of marks, which are called positive marks, and they are such as are always, and only found, in regenerate souls: The hypocrite hath them not; the grown Christian hath them, and that in an eminent degree: The poorest Christian hath them in a lower, but saving degree: Great care must be taken in the application of them. And it is past doubt that many weak and injudicious Christians have been greatly prejudiced by finding the experiences of eminent Christians proposed as rules to mea-

sure their sincerity by. Alas! these no more fit their souls, than Saul's armour did David's body.

These things being premised, and a due care carried along with us through this discourse, I shall next come to the particulars, and shew you what those things are which discover the state and tempers of our souls. And though it be true, that there is no condition we are in, no providence that befals us, but it takes some proof, and makes some discovery of our hearts; yet, to limit this discourse, and fall into particulars as soon as we can, I shall shew what trials are made of our graces in this world, by our prosperity, and our adversity; by our corruptions, and our duties, and, lastly, by our sufferings upon the score and account of religion.

SECT. I.

FIRST, prosperity, success, and the increase of outward enjoyments, are to grace what fire is to gold. Riches and honours make trial what we are; and by these things many a false heart hath been detected, as well as the sincerity and eminency of others graces discovered. We may fancy the fire of prosperity to be rather for comfort than trial? to refresh us rather than to prove us; but you will find prosperity to be a great discovery, and that scarce any thing proves the truth and strength of men's graces and corruptions more than that doth: *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata*, saith Bernard; to find humility with honour, is to find a Phœnix. Let an obscure person be lifted up to honour, and how steady and well composed soever he was before, it is a thousand to one but his eyes will dazzle, and his head run round when he is upon the lofty pinnacle of praise and honour *; Prov. xxvii. 21. "As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise:" Put the best gold into the fining-pot of praise, and it is a great wonder if a great deal of dross do not appear, Isa. xxxix. 2. the vain-glory of good Hezekiah rose like froth or scum upon the pot, when heated by prosperity. It was such a fining-pot to Herod, as discovered him to be dross itself, Acts xii. 23. How did that poor woman swell under that trial into the conceit of his being a god, and was justly destroyed by worms, because he forgat himself to be one? We think little what a strange alteration an exalted state will make upon our spirits. When the prophet would abate the vain confidence of Hazael, who would not believe that ever he would be turned into such a savage beast as the prophet had foretold; he only tells him, "The Lord hath shewed me, that thou "shalt be king over Syria," 2 Kin. viii. 13. The meaning is, Do not be too confident Hazael, that thy temper and disposition can never alter to that degree; thou never yet sattest on a throne: When men see the crown upon thy head, then they will better see the true temper of thy heart.

* *Magistratus indicat virum*; *i. e.* Preferment proves a man.

How humble was Israel in the wilderness, tame and tractable in a lean pasture; but bring them once unto Canaan, and the world is strangely altered; then "we are lords, (say they) we will come no "more unto thee," Jer. ii. 2, 7, 31. Prosperity is a crisis both to grace and corruption. Thence is that caution to Israel, Deut. x. 11, 12. "When thou hast eaten, and art full, then beware lest thou "forget the Lord thy God." Then beware, that is the critical time; surely that man must be acknowledged rich, very rich in grace, whose grace suffers no diminution or eclipse by his riches; and that man deserves double honour, whose pride the honours of this world cannot provoke and inflame.

It was a sad truth from the lips of a pious divine in Germany upon his death-bed; being somewhat disconsolate by reflecting upon the barrenness of his life, some friends took thence an occasion to commend him, and mind him of his painful ministry and fruitful life among them; but he cried out, *Auferte ignem, adhuc enim paleas habeo;* Withdraw the fire, for I have chaff in me; meaning, that he felt his ambition like chaff catching fire from the sparks of their praises. Like unto which was the saying of another, *He that praises me, wounds me.*

But to descend into the particular discoveries that prosperity and honour made of the want of grace in some, and of the weakness of grace in others; I will shew you what symptoms of hypocrisy appear upon some men under the trial of prosperity, and what signs of grace appear in others under the same trial.

SECT. IV.

PROSPERITY discovers many sad symptoms of a naughty heart: and, among others, these are ordinarily most conspicuous.

1. *First,* It casts the hearts of some men into a deep oblivion of God, and makes them lay aside all care of duty; *Raro fumant fœlicibus aræ;* the altars of rich men seldom smoke, Deut. xxxii. 13, 14, 15. Jeshurun sucked honey out of the rock, eat the fat of lambs, and kidneys of wheat: But what was the effect of this; he kicked and forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Instead of lifting up their hearts in an humble thankful acknowledgment of God's bounty, they lifted up the heel in a wanton abuse of his mercy: In the fattest earth we find the most slippery footing.

He that is truly gracious may, in prosperity, remit some degrees; but a carnal heart there loseth all that which in a low condition he seemed to save. Augur's deprecation, as to himself, no doubt, was built upon his frequent observation how it was with others; Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Lest I be full, and deny God."

It is said Eccl. v. 12. "That the abundance of the rich will not "suffer him to sleep;" and I wish that were the worst injury it did

him; but alas! it will not suffer him to pray, to meditate, to allow time and thoughts about his eternal concernments; he falls asleep in the lap of prosperity, and forgets that there is a God to be served, or a soul to be saved. O this is a dangerous symptom of a very graceless heart!

2. *Secondly*, Prosperity meeting with a graceless heart, makes it wholly sensual, and entirely swallows up its thoughts and affections: Earthly things transform and mould their hearts into their own similitude and nature; the whole strength of their souls goes out to those enjoyments. So those graceless, yet prosperous persons are described, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They take the timbrel and harp, and "rejoice at the sound of the organ: they spend their days in wealth." *They take the timbrel*, not the Bible. "They rejoice at the sound of "the organ;" not a word of their rejoicing in God. "They sent "forth their little ones in the dance:" That is all the catechism they are taught: "They spend their days in wealth:" their whole time, that precious stock and talent is wholly laid out upon these sensitive things: Either the pleasure of it powerfully charms them, or the cares of it wholly engross their minds, that there is no time to spare for God. *They live in pleasure upon earth*, as it is, Jam. v. 5. just as the fish lives in the water, its proper element: Take him off from these things, and put him upon spiritual, serious, heavenly employments, and he is *Piscis in arido;* like a fish upon the dry land.

Now, though prosperity may too much influence and ensnare the minds of good men, and estrange them too much from heavenly things; yet thus to engross their hearts, and convert them into their own similitude and nature, so that these things should be the centre of their hearts, the very proper element in which they live, is utterly impossible.

An hypocrite indeed may be brought to this, because, though Janus like, he have two faces, yet he really hath but one principle, and that is wholly carnal and earthly: So that it is easy to make all the water to run into one channel, to gather all into one entire stream, in which his heart shall pour out all its strength to the creature.

But a Christian indeed hath a double principle that acts him: though he have a law of sin that moves him one way, yet there is in him also the law of grace, which thwarts and crosses that principle of corruption: So that as grace cannot do what it would, because of sin; so neither can sin do what it would, because of grace, Gal. v. 17.

The heart of a Christian, in the midst of ensnaring, sensitive enjoyments, finds indeed a corrupt principle in it, which would incline him to fall asleep upon such a soft pillow, and forget God and duty: but it cannot. O no! it cannot do so; there is a principle of grace within him, that never leaves jogging, disturbing, and calling upon him till he rise and return to his God, the true rest of his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, A false pretender to religion, an hypocritical professor, meeting with prosperity and success, grows altogether unconcern-

ed about that interest of religion, and senseless of the calamities of God's people. Thus the prophet convinces the Jews of their hypocrisy, Amos vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. "They were at ease in Zion, and "trusted in the mountain of Samaria:" And so, having a shadow of religion, and a fulness of all earthly things, they fell to feasting and sporting: "They drank wine in bowls, and anointed themselves "with the chief ointments, but were not grieved for the affliction "of Joseph." They condoled not, *Gnal sheber*, over the breakings or tearing to pieces of Joseph: If they were out of danger once, let the church shift for itself, they are secure in a warm nest: Let the birds of prey catch and devour that flock with which they sometimes associated, they are not touched with it. Moses could not do so, though in the greatest security and confluence of the honours and pleasures of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. Nehemiah could not do so, though the servant and favourite of a mighty monarch, and wanted nothing to make him outwardly happy; yet the pleasures of a king's court could not cheer his heart, or scatter the clouds of sorrow from his countenance, whilst his brethren were in affliction, and the city of his God lay waste, Nehemiah ii. 1, 2, 3. Nor indeed can any gracious heart be unconcerned and senseless; for that union that all the saints have with Christ their head, and with one another, as fellow-members in Christ, will beget sympathy among them in their sufferings, 1 Cor. xii. 26.

SECT. V.

BUT as the fire of prosperity discovers this and much more dross in a graceless heart, so it discovers the sincerity and grace of God's people: I say not that it discovers nothing but grace in them; O that it did not! alas! many of them have had a great deal of dross and corruption discovered by it, as was noted before: But yet in this trial, the graciousness and uprightness of their hearts will appear in these, and such like workings of it.

1. *First*, Under prosperity, success, and honour, the upright heart will labour to suppress pride, and keep itself lowly and humble? and still the more grace there is, the more humility there will be. If God lift him up, he will lay himself low, and exalt his God high. So did Jacob when God had raised and enlarged him; Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth "which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, for with my staff I pas-"sed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands."

Great was the difference in Jacob's outward condition at his return, from what it was at his first passage over Jordan; then poor, now rich; then single and comfortless, now the head of a great family: Yea, but though this outward estate was altered, the frame of his heart was not altered. Jacob was an holy and humble man when he went out, and so he was when he returned: He saw a multi-

tude of mercies about him, and among them all, not one but was greater than himself.

I dare not say every Christian under prosperity can at all times manifest like humility; but I am sure what pride and vanity soever may rise in a gracious heart tried by prosperity, there is that within him which will give check to it: He dare not suffer such proud thoughts to lodge quietly in his heart: for, alas! he sees that in himself, and that in his God, that will abase him: Grace will make him look back to his original condition, and say, with David, "What am I, "O Lord God? and what is my father's house, that thou hast "brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18.

It will make him look in, and see the baseness of his own heart, and the corruptions that are there, and admire at the dealings of God with so vile a creature. O, thinks he, if others did but know what I know of myself, they would abhor me more than now they esteem and value me.

2. *Secondly*, Prosperity usually draws forth the saints love to the God of their mercies: that which heats a wicked man's lusts, warms a gracious man's heart with love and delight in God.

These were the words of that lovely song which David sang in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he said, "I will love thee, O Lord, "my strength," Psal. xviii. title and ver. 1. compared. These outward things are not the main grounds and motives of their love to God; no; they love him when he takes away, as well as when he gives: but they are sanctified instruments to inflame their love to God: they boil up a wicked man's lusts, but they melt a gracious man's soul. O in what a pang of love did David go into the presence of God under the sense of his mercies! his melting mercies! when he thus poured out his whole soul in a stream of love to his God, 2 Sam. vii. 19, 20. "Is this the manner of men, O Lord "God? And what can David say more unto thee?" An expression that turns up the very bottom of his heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Prosperity and comfortable Providences do usually become cautions against sin, when they meet with a sanctified soul. This is the natural inference of a gracious soul from them: hath God pleased me, then hath he obliged me to take more care to please him; O let me not grieve him, that hath comforted me! So Ezra ix. 13. "After such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy com- "mandments! What! break his commandments who hath broken our bonds! God forbid!

It was an excellent resolution of a Christian once, who receiving an eminent mercy at the same time he felt himself under the power of a special corruption: "Well, (saith he) now will I go forth in the "strength of this mercy, to mortify and subdue that corruption." I will not measure every Christian by the eminent workings of grace in some one; but surely so far I may safely go, that sincerity knows

not how to sin, because grace hath abounded, any more than it dare sin, that grace may abound.

4. *Fourthly*, A truly gracious soul will not be satisfied with all the prosperity and comforts in the world for his portion: *Not thine, Lord but thee*, is the voice of grace. When providence had been more than ordinarily bountiful in outward things to Luther, he began to be afraid of its meaning, and earnestly protested, God should not put him off so. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul," Lam. iii. 24. and the soul can best tell what it hath made its choice, and whereon it hath bestowed its chief delights and expectations.

An unsound heart will accept these for its portion: if the world be sure to him, and his designs fail not there, he can be content to leave God, and soul, and heaven, and hell at hazard; but so cannot the upright. These things in subordination; but neither these, nor any thing under the sun, in comparison with, or opposition to God.

CHAP. V.

Shewing what probation adversity makes of the sincerity or unsoundness of our hearts.

SECT. I.

THAT adversity is a furnace to try of what metal our hearts are, none can doubt, that hath either studied the scriptures, or observed his own heart under afflictions.

When the dross and rust of hypocrisy and corruption had almost eaten out the heart of religion among the Jews, then saith God, "I "will melt them, and try them; for what shall I do for the daughter "of my people?" Jer. ix. 7. Here affliction is the furnace, and the people are the metal cast into it, and the end of it is trial. *I will melt them, and try them;* what other course shall I take with them? If I let them alone, their lusts, like the rust and canker in metals, will eat them out. Prosperity multiplies professors, and adversity brings them to the test; then hirelings quickly become changlings. The gilded potsherd glisters till it come to scouring. The devil thought Job had been such a one, and moves that he may be tried this way; being confident he would be found but dross in the trial, Job i. 11. But though the furnace of affliction discovered some dross in him (as it will in the best of men) yet he came forth as gold.

In this furnace also grace is manifested: it is said, Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the faith and patience of the saints;" i. e. here is the trial and discovery of it in these days of adversity. It was a weighty saying of * Tertullian to the persecutors of the church in his days, *Pro-*

* *Tertul. in Apol.*

batio innocentiæ nostræ, est iniquitas vestra ; Your wickedness is the trial of our innocency. Constantius, the father of Constantine, made an exploratory decree, that all who would not renounce the Christian faith, should lose their places of honour and profit. This presently separated the dross from the gold, which was his design; for many renounced Christianity, and thereupon were renounced by him; and those that held their integrity, were received into favour.

In time of prosperity, hypocrisy lies covered in the heart like nests in the green bushes; but when the winter of adversity hath made them bare, every body may see them without searching.

But to fall into close particulars; it will be necessary to enquire what effects of adversity are common to both the sound and the unsound; and then what are proper to either in this close trial by adversity.

SECT. II.

IT will be expedient to the design I manage in this discourse, to shew in the first place what are the common effects of adversity to both the godly and ungodly; for in some things they differ not, but as it is with the one, so also with the other: As,

1. *First*, Both the godly and ungodly may fear adversity before it comes: to be sure a wicked man cannot, and it is evident many godly men do not come up to the height of that rule, James i. 2. "To ac- "count it all joy when they fall into diverse temptations," or trials by adversity.

It is said, Isa. xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; "trembling surprizeth the hypocrite;" namely under the apprehension of approaching calamities: and it is true also, the saints in Zion may be afraid: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments," said holy David, Psal. cxix. 120. and Job iii. 23. "The thing which I greatly feared (saith that upright soul) is come "upon me." There is a vast difference betwixt a saint's first meeting with afflictions, and his parting with them; he entertains them sometimes with trembling; he parts with them rejoicing, smiling on them, and blessing them in the name of the Lord. So that by this the upright, and the false heart, are not discriminated; even sanctified nature declines suffering and troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Both the godly and ungodly may entertain afflictions with regret and unwillingness when they come. Afflictions and troubles are wormwood and gall, Lam. iii. 19. And that goes not down pleasantly with flesh and blood, Heb. xii. 11. "No affliction "for the present seemeth joyous but grievous;" he means to God's own people; they are in heaviness through manifold temptations or trials by the rod, 1 Pet. i. 6. When God gives the cup of affliction into the hands of the wicked, how do they reluctate and loath it? How do their stomachs rise at it? And though the portion of the saints cup be much sweeter than theirs, (for that bitter ingredient of

God's vindictive wrath is not in it,) yet even they shrink from it, and loth they are to taste it.

3. *Thirdly*, Both the one and the other may be impatient and fretful in adversity; it is the very nature of flesh and blood to be so. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose "waters cast forth mire and dirt," Isa. lvii. 20. It is an allusion to the unstable and stormy ocean: you know there is naturally an estuation and working in the sea, whether it be incensed by the wind or no; but if a violent wind blow upon the unquiet ocean, O what a raging and foaming is there! what abundance of trash and filth doth it at such times cast out!

Now, though grace make a great difference betwixt one and another, yet, I dare not say, but even a gracious heart may be very unquiet and tumultuous in the day of affliction. Sanctified souls have their passions and lusts which are too little mortified; even as sweet-brier and holy-thistles have their prickles, as well as the worthless bramble. Jonah was a good man, yet his soul was sadly distempered by adverse providences; Jonah iv. 9. "Yea, (saith he, and that to his God) I "do well to be angry, even unto death."

4. *Fourthly*, But the one and the other may be weary of the rod, and think the day of adversity a tedious day, wishing it were once at an end. Babylon shall be weary of the evil that God will bring upon it, Jer. li. *ult.* And O that none of Zion's children were weary of adversity too! How sad a moan doth Job make of his long-continued affliction, Job xvi. 6, 7. "Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; "and though I forbear, what am I eased? But now he hath made "me weary."

And if you look into Psalm vi. 3, 6. you may see another strong Christian even tired in the way of affliction: "My soul (saith David "in that place) is sore vexed, but thou, O Lord, how long? I am "weary with my groaning."

5. *Fifthly*, Both the one and the other may be driven to their knees by adversity. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they have "poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them," Isa. xxvi. 16. Not that a godly person will pray no longer than the rod is at his back; O no; he cannot live long without prayer, how few calls soever he hath to that duty by the rod; but when the rod is on his back, he will be more frequently and more fervently upon his knees; indeed many gracious hearts are like children's tops, which will go no longer than they are whipt; they cannot find their knees and their tongues till God find a rod to excite them. A dangerous symptom. The same affliction may put a gracious and graceless soul to their knees: but though in the external matter of duty, and in the external call and occasion of duty, they seem to agree, yet is there a vast difference in the principles, manner, and ends of these their duties; as will evidently appear in its proper place in our following discourse.

But by what hath been said in this section, you may see how in

some things the holy upright soul acts too like the unsanctified, and in other things how much the hypocrite may act like a saint; he may be externally humbled, so was Ahab; he may pray under the rod, Mal. ii. 13. yea, and request others to pray for him, so did Simon, Acts viii. 24.

SECT. III.

BUT though the sound and unsound heart differ not in some external carriages under the rod, yet there are effects of adversity which are proper to either, and will discriminate them. To which end let us first see what effects adversity is usually followed withal in unsound and carnal hearts: and we shall find among others, these five symptoms of a naughty heart appearing under crosses and afflictions.

1. *First*, A graceless heart is not quickly and easily brought to see the hand of God in those troubles that befal it, and to be duly affected with it; Isa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will "not see:" when it has smitten, or is lifted up to smite, they shut their eyes; it is the malice of this man, or the negligence of that, or the unfaithfulness of another, that hath brought all this trouble upon me. Thus the creature is the horizon that terminates their sight, and beyond that they usually see nothing. Sometimes indeed the hand of God is so immediately manifested, and convincingly discovered in afflictions, that they cannot avoid the sight of it; and then they may, in their way, pour out a prayer before him; but ordinarily they impute all to second causes, and overlook the first cause of their troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Nor is it usual with these men under the rod to retire into their closets, and search their hearts there, to find out the particular cause and provocation of their affliction: "No man repented "him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?" Jer. viii. 6. What cursed thing is there with me, that hath thus incensed the anger of God against me! God visits their iniquities with afflictions, but they visit not their own hearts by self-examinations. God judges them, but they judge not themselves: He shews their iniquities in a clear glass, but none saith, *What have I done?* This phrase, *What have I done?* is the voice of one that recollects himself after a rash action; or the voice of a man astonished at the discovery afflictions make of his sins; but no such voice as this is ordinarily heard among carnal men.

3. *Thirdly*, An unsound professor, if left to his choice, would rather chuse sin than affliction; and sees more evil in that than in this.

And it cannot be doubted, if we consider the principle by which all unregenerate men are acted, is sense, not faith. Hence Job's friends would have argued his hypocrisy, Job xxxvi. 21. And had their application been as right as their rule, it would have concluded it; *This* (viz. sin) *hast thou chosen, rather than affliction.*

I do not say that an upright man cannot commit a moral evil, to escape a penal evil. O that daily observation did not too plentifully furnish us with sad instances of that kind! But upright ones do not, dare not, upon a serious deliberate discussion and debate, choose sin rather than affliction; what they may do upon surprisals and in the violence of temptation, is of another nature.

But a false and unsound heart discovers itself in the choice it makes upon deliberation, and that frequently when sin and trouble come in competition. Put the case, saith Augustine, a ruffian should with one hand set the cup of drunkenness to thy mouth, and with the other a dagger to thy breast, and say, drink or die; thou shouldest rather choose to die sober, than to live a drunkard: And many Christians have resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and, with renowned Moses, chosen affliction, the worst of afflictions, yea, death itself in the most formidable appearance, rather than sin; and it is the habitual temper and resolution of every gracious heart so to do, though those holy resolutions are sometimes over-borne by violence of temptation.

But the hypocrite dreads less the defilement of his soul, than the loss of his estate, liberty, or life. If you ask upon what ground then doth the apostle suppose, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. a man may give his body to be burnt, and not have charity; that the *salamander* of hypocrisy may live in the flame of martyrdom? The answer is at hand; They that choose death in the sense of this text, do not choose it to escape sin, but to feed and indulge it. Those strange adventures (if any such be) are rather to maintain their own honour, and enrol their names among worthy and famous persons to posterity; or out of a blind zeal to their espoused errors and mistakes, than in a due regard to the glory of God, and the preservation of integrity. 'I fear to 'speak it, but it must be spoken, (saith * Hierom), That even mar-'tyrdom itself, when suffered for admiration and applause, profits 'nothing, but that blood is shed in vain.'

4. *Fourthly*, It is the property of an unregenerate soul, under adversity, to turn from creature to creature for support and comfort, and not from every creature to God alone. So long as their feet can touch ground, I mean, feel any creature-relief or comfort under them, they can subsist and live in afflictions; but when they lose ground, when all creature-refuge fails, then their hearts fail too.

Thus Zedekiah, and the self-deceiving Jews, when they saw their own strength failed them, and there was little hope left that they should deliver themselves from the Chaldeans, what do they in that strait? Do they, with upright Jehoshaphat say, "Our eyes are unto "thee?" No, their eyes were upon Egypt for succour, not upon Heaven; well, Pharaoh and his aids are left still, all hope is not

* *Timeo dicere, sed dicendum est; martyrium ipsum si ideo fiat ut admirationi et laudi habeatur a fratribus; frustra sanguis effusus est.* Hier.

gone, Jer. xxxvii. 9. See the like in Ahaz, in a sore plunge and distress, he courts the king of Assyria for help, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, 23. That project failing, why then he will try what the gods of Damascus can do for him; any way rather than the right way, *Flectere si nequeam superos, Acheronta movebo.*

So it is with many others: if one child die, what do they do, run to God, and comfort themselves in this, the Lord liveth, though my child die. If an estate be lost, and a family sinking, do they with David comfort themselves in the everlasting covenant, ordered and sure? No; but if one relation die, there is another alive; if an estate be lost, yet not all; something is left still, and the case will mend.

As long as ever such men have any visible encouragement, they will hang upon it; and not make up all in Christ, and encourage themselves in the Lord. To tell them of rejoicing in the Lord, when the fig-tree blossoms not, is what they cannot understand.

5. *Fifthly*, To conclude; an unsound heart never comes out of the furnace of affliction purged, mortified, and more spiritual and holy than when he was cast into it; his scum and dross is not there separated from him; nay, the more they are afflicted, the worse they are. "Why should ye be smitten any more? ye will revolt more "and more," Isa. i. 5. And, to keep to our metaphor, consult Jer. vi. 29. God had put that incorrigible people into the furnace of affliction, and kept them long in that fire; and what was the issue? Why, saith the prophet, "The bellows are burnt, the lead is con- "sumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, &c. reprobate silver "shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them."

If the fire of affliction be continually blown till the very bellows be burnt, that is, the tongue, or rather the lungs of the prophet, which have some resemblance; though these be even spent in reproving, and threatening, and denouncing woe upon woe, and judgment upon judgment; and God fulfils his word upon them; yet still they are as before; the dross remains: though Jerusalem be made a pot, and the inhabitants the flesh boiling in it, as is noted (pertinently to my discourse) in Ezek. xxiv. 6, 13. *the scum remains with them*, and cannot be separated by the fire; and the reason is plain, because no affliction in itself purges sin, but as it is sanctified, and works in the virtue of God's blessing, and in pursuance of the promises.

O think on this you that have had thousands of afflictions in one kind and another, and none of them all have done you good; they have not mortified, humbled, or benefited you at all: And thus you see what the effects of adversity are, when it meets with a graceless heart.

SECT. IV.

BY this time, reader, I suppose thou art desirous to know what effects adversity and affliction use to have when they meet with an honest and sincere heart: Only, before I come to particulars, I

think it needful to acquaint thee, that the fruits of afflictions are mostly after-fruits, and not so discernible by the Christian himself under the rod, as after he hath been exercised by it, Heb. xii. 11. and calmly reflects upon what is past; nor doth every Christian attain the same measure and degree; some rejoice, others commonly submit; but I think these seven effects are ordinarily found in all upright hearts that pass under the rod.

1. *First*, The sincere and upright soul betakes itself to God in affliction; Job i. 20. When God was smiting, Job was praying; when God afflicted, Job worshipped: So David, Psalm cxvi. 3, 4. "I "found sorrow and trouble, then called I upon the name of the "Lord." And when the messenger of Satan buffeted Paul. "For "this cause (saith he) I besought the Lord thrice," 2 Cor xii. 8. Alas! whither should a child go in distress, but to its father?

2. *Secondly*, He sees and owns the hand of God in his afflictions, how much or little soever of the instruments of trouble appear. *The Lord hath taken away*, saith Job, Job i. 21. *God had bidden him*, saith David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. If the blow come from the hand of a wicked man, yet he sees that wicked hand in God's righteous hand, Psalm xvii. 14. And this apprehension is fundamental to all that communion men have with God in their afflictions, and to all that peaceableness and gracious submission of their spirits under the rod: He that sees nothing of God in his troubles, hath nothing of God in his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, He can justify God in all the afflictions and troubles that come upon him, be they never so severe. "Thou art just in all "that is brought upon us," saith Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. "Thou "hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve," saith Ezra, Ezra ix. 13. "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed," saith the church, Lam. iii. 22. Are we in Babylon? It is a mercy we are not in hell. If God condemn him, yet he will justify God; If God cast him into a sea of trouble, yet he will acknowledge, in all that sea of trouble, there is not one drop of injustice. If I have not deserved such usage from the hands of men, yet I have deserved worse than this at the hands of God.

4. *Fourthly*, Afflictions use to melt and humble gracious hearts; there is an habitual tenderness planted in their spirits, and a just occasion quickly draws it forth: And so usual a thing it is for gracious hearts to be humbled under the afflictings of God, that affliction is upon that score called humiliation: The effect put for the cause, to shew where one is, the other will be, 2 Cor. xii. 21. *My God will humble me*, i. e. he will afflict me with the sight of your sins and disorders; and if a gracious soul be so apt to be humbled for other men's sins, much more for his own.

5. *Fifthly*, The upright soul is inquisitive under the rod, to find out that evil for which the Lord contends with him by affliction; Job x. 2. Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me:" And

Job xxxiv. 32. "That which I see not, teach thou me: If I have "done iniquity, I will do no more." So Lam. iii. 39, 40. "Let us "search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." In afflicting, God searches them, and under affliction they search themselves: Willing they are to hear the voice of the rod, and glad of any discovery it makes in their hearts.

6. *Sixthly*, The upright heart chooseth to lie under affliction, rather than to be delivered from it by sin. I say, this is the choice and resolution of every upright heart, however it may be sometimes overborne by the violence of temptation, Heb. xi. 35. *Not accepting deliverance*, viz. upon sinful terms and conditions.

They are sensible how the flesh smarts under the rod, but had rather it should smart, than conscience should smart under guilt. Affliction, saith an upright soul, grieves me, but sin will grieve God; affliction wounds my flesh, but sin will wound my soul. Deliverance I long for, but I will not pay so dear for it, how much soever I desire it: *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam:* Outward ease is sweet, but inward peace is sweeter.

7. *Seventhly*, He prizeth the spiritual good gotten by affliction, above deliverance from it, and can bless God from his heart for those mercies, how dear soever his flesh hath paid for them, Psalm cxix. 67, and 71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Such is the value the people of God have for spiritual graces, that they cannot think them dear, whatever their flesh hath paid for them. The mortification of one lust, one discovery of sincerity, one manifestation of God to their souls, doth much more than make amends for all that they have endured under the rod.

Is patience improved, self-acquaintance increased, the vanity of the creature more effectually taught, longings after heaven enflamed? O blessed afflictions, that are attended with such blessed fruits? It was the saying of a holy man, under a sore trouble for the death of an only son, when in that dark day God had graciously manifested himself to his soul; 'O, (saith he) I would be contented, if it were possible, 'to lay an only son in the grave every day I have to live in the 'world, for one such discovery of the love of God as I now enjoy.'

CHAP. VI.

Shewing indwelling sin to be to grace, what fire is to gold; and how the soundness and unsoundness of our hearts are discovered by our carriage towards it.

SECT. I.

PROSPERITY and adversity put sincerity to the trial; but nothing makes a deeper search into our bosoms, nothing sifts our spirits more narrowly, or tells us what our state is more plainly,

than our behaviour towards that corruption which dwells in us; the thorn is next neighbour to the rose: Sin and grace dwell not only in the same soul, but in the same faculties. The collier and fuller dwell in one room; what one cleanses the other blacks. Of all the evils God permits in this world, none is more grievous to his people than this: They sometimes wonder why the Lord will suffer it to be so; why, surely, among other wise and holy ends of this permission, these are some.

They are left to try you, and to humble you: There is no intrinsic goodness in sin; but, however, in this it occasions good to us, that by our carriage towards it, we discern our sincerity. The touch-stone is a worthless stone in itself, but it serves to try the gold; 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit "sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he "is born of God: In this the children of God are manifest, and the "children of the devil:" q. d. In respect of their carriage towards sin, the one and the other is plainly manifested: This is that which separates the dross from the gold, and shews you what the true state of men's persons, and tempers of their hearts are. By not sinning, we are not to understand a total freedom from it in this world, as if it implied any such perfection of the people of God in this world; that is the Popish and Pelagian sense: Nor yet must we take it in the Arminian sense, who, to avoid the argument of the orthodox, will understand it of the sin against the Holy Ghost. What a strange thing would it be, to make that a characteristical note of distinction betwixt the godly and ungodly, which so very few, even of the most ungodly, are ever guilty of?

But the manner of our behaviour towards sin, and our carriage towards it before, or under, or after the commission of it, in that the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.

Now, there are five things relating to sin, that discriminate and mark the state of the persons: The difference is discernable.

In our
1. Abstinence from sin.
2. Hatred of sin.
3. Trouble about sin.
4. Subjection to sin.
5. Opposition to sin.

SECT. II.

(1.) THE grounds and motives of our abstinence do very clearly manifest the state of our souls; what they are in the regenerate and unregenerate, is our next work: and let it be considered,

1. *First*, That an unsound and unrenewed heart may abstain from one sin, because it is contrary to, and inconsistent with another sin: For, it is with the sins of our nature, as it is with the diseases of our bodies: Though all diseases be contrary to health, yet some diseases,

as the fever and palsy, are contrary to each other. So are prodigality and covetousness, hypocrisy and profaneness. These oppose each other, not for mutual destruction, as sin and grace do, but for superiority, each contending for the throne, and sometimes taking it by turns. It is with such persons as with that possessed man, Mat. xvii. 15. whom the spirit cast sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water: Or if one subdue the other, yet the heart is also subdued to the vassalage of that lust that is uppermost in the soul.

2. *Secondly*, An unrenewed soul may be kept from the commission of some sin, not because there is a principle of grace within him, but because of some providential restraint without him, or upon him: For it often falls out, that when men have conceived sin, and are ready to execute it, providence claps on the fetters of restraint, and hinders them from so doing.

This was the case with Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6. and 17. compared, *I with-held thee:* And though persons so restrained, have not the good of such providences, yet others have; for by it a world of mischief is prevented in the world, which otherwise would break out; and to this act of providence we owe our lives, liberties, estates, and comforts in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, An unsound heart may not commit some sins, not because he truly hates them, but because his constitution inclines him not to them: These men are rather beholden to a good temper of body, than to a gracious temper of soul. Some men cannot be drunkards if they would, others cannot be covetous and base; they are made *e meliori luto*, of a more refined metal than others; but chaste and liberal, just and sober nature, is but nature still: The best nature, in all its endowments, is but nature at the best.

4. *Fourthly*, A graceless heart may be restrained from sin by the force of education and principles of morality that were instilled into it. Thus Jehoash was restrained from sin, 2 Kings xii. 2. "And Je-"hoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, all the "days wherein Jehoiadah the priest instructed him." The fear of a parent or master will do a great deal more with some in this case than the fear of God. The influences of strict education nips off the excrescencies of budding vice. The way we are taught when young, we keep when old: This is the influence of man upon man, not the influence of the regenerating Spirit upon men.

5. *Fifthly*, A graceless heart may be kept from some sins by the fear of the events, both in this world and that to come. Sin that is followed with infamy and reproach among men, may on this ground be forborne; not because God hath forbidden it, but because human laws will punish it, and the sober world will brand us for it: And some look farther, to the punishment of sin in hell; they are not afraid to sin, but they are afraid to burn.

Here sin is like a sweet rose in a brake of thorns; fain we would have it, but we are loth to tear our flesh to come by it. It is good

that sin is prevented any way; but to be kept on this ground from sin, doth not argue the estate of the person to be good: And thus you see some of the grounds on which carnal men are restrained: and in this "the children of the devil are manifest."

SECT. III.

BUT there are grounds of abstinence from sin, by which "the "children of God are also manifested;" and such are these that follow:

1. *First*, A sincere heart dares not sin because of the eye and fear of God, which is upon him: So you find it in Job xxxi. 1, and 4. he durst not allow his thoughts to sin, because he lived under the awe of God's eye. Nehemiah durst not do as former governors had done, though an opportunity presented to enrich himself, *because of the fear of his God*, Neh. v. 15. The soul that lives under the awe of this eye, will be conscientious where no discovery can be made by creatures, as if all the world were looking on, Levit. xix. 14. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before "the blind; but shalt fear thy God, I am the Lord."

What if a man do curse the deaf, the deaf cannot hear him, and what if he do put a stumbling-block before the blind, the blind cannot see him: True, but God sees him, God hears him; that is enough to a man that hath the fear of the Lord upon his heart.

2. *Secondly*, As the fear of God, so the love of God, is a principle of restraint from sin to the soul that is upright. This kept back Joseph from sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wicked-"ness, and sin against God?" *How can I?* He speaks as a man that feels himself bound up from sin by the goodness and love of God, that had been manifested to him, q. d. Hath he delivered me from the pit into which my envious brethren cast me? Hath he, in so miraculous a way, advanced me to all this honour and power in Egypt? And now, after all his kindness and love to me, shall I sin against him? O how can I do this against so good, so gracious a God? So Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Love will cry out in the hour of temptation, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Dost thou thus requite the Lord for all his kindnesses?

3. *Thirdly*, As the love of God, so the intrinsical evil and filthiness that is in sin keeps back the gracious soul from it, Rom. xii. 9. "Abhor that which is evil," αποστυγουντες το πονηρον, hate it as hell itself: Or, as the French translation hath it, be in horror. As the apprehensions of hell, so the apprehensions of sin impress horror upon the mind that is sanctified: Nothing more loathsome to an holy soul; its aversations from it are with the highest indignation and loathing.

4. *Fourthly*, The renewed nature of a saint restrains him from sin; Gal. v. 17. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that ye cannot "do the thing ye would." Ye cannot, why cannot ye? because it is against your new nature.

Beloved, This is a very remarkable thing in the experience of all renewed men, That, upon the renovation of men's principles, their delights, and their aversations and loathings are laid quite cross and opposite to what they were before. In their carnal state, vain company and sinful exercises were their delight. To be separated from these, and tied to prayer, meditation, heavenly discourse and company; O what a bondage would that have been! Now to be tied to such carnal society, and restrained from such duties of godliness, and the society of the godly, become a much sorer bondage to the soul.

5. *Fifthly*, *Experience of the bitterness of sin* is a restraint to a gracious heart. They that have had so many sick days and sorrowful nights for sin as they have had, are loth to taste that wormwood and gall again, which their soul hath still in remembrance; 2 Cor. vii. 11. "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought!" He would not grapple with those inward troubles again, he would not have the cheerful light of God's countenance eclipsed again for all, and much more than all, the pleasures that are in sin.

6. *Sixthly*, The consideration of the sufferings of Christ for sin, powerfully with-holds a gracious soul from the commission of it; Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of "sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Were there a knife or sword in the house that had been thrust through the heart of your father, would you ever endure the sight of it? Sin was the sword that pierced Christ, and so the death of Christ becomes the death of sin in his people. Thus the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest, in the principles and reasons of their abstinence from sin.

SECT. IV.

(2.) SECONDLY, They are also manifested by their hatred of sin. This puts a clear distinction betwixt them; for no false or unregenerate heart can hate sin as sin; he may indeed,

1. *First*, Hate sin in another, but not in himself: Thus one proud man hates another; *Calco superbiam Platonis*, said Diogenes, when he trampled Plato's fine clothes under foot; I spurn the pride of Plato. *Sed majori superbia*, as Plato smartly replied, Thou tramplest upon my pride, but it is with greater pride. "Why (saith Christ to "the hypocrite) beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, "but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Mat. vii. 3. How quick in espying, and rash in censuring the smallest fault in another, is the hypocrite! it was but one fault, and that but a small one, but a mote that he could find in another; yet this he quickly discerns: It may be there were many excellent graces in him, these he overlooks, but the mote he plainly discerns.

It may be that mote in his brother's eye, had drawn many tears from it, but these he takes no notice of; and meanwhile there is a

beam, i. e. great horrid flagitious evil, in himself; but it is too near him to be discerned or bewailed: This is a sad symptom of a naughty heart.

2. *Secondly*, He may hate it in its effects and consequents; not in its own nature; as the thief hates the gallows, not the wickedness that he hath done. It is not sin itself, but sin in its connexion with hell, that is frightful to him.

The unsound professor could wish that there were no such threatening in the Bible against sin. When sin tempts him, I would, saith he, but I fear the consequence. O sin, could I separate thee from hell, nothing should separate thee and me.

3. *Thirdly*, He may hate it in a mood or pang, but not with a rooted habitual hatred. It is plain from 2 Pet. ii. 22. That sin may sometimes lie upon the conscience of an unregenerate man, as a load lies upon a sick stomach; and so he may discharge himself of it by reformation, restitution, &c. but a little time reconciles the quarrel betwixt him and his lust again: If they fall out, they will fall in again: "The dog returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to "her wallowing in the mire."

But an upright soul hates sin in another manner; and in this hatred of sin the children of God are manifest.

1. *First*. The opposition of sin to God, is the very ground and formal reason upon which a gracious soul opposes and hates it. If it be opposite to the holy nature and law of God, it cannot but be odious in his eyes: This cut David's heart, Psal. li. 4. "Against "thee, thee only have I sinned," q. d. I have wronged Uriah greatly, I have wronged myself and family greatly; but the wrong I have done to others is not worth naming, in comparison of the wrong I have done to thee.

2. *Secondly*, The upright soul hates sin in himself more than he hates it in any other; as a man hates a serpent in the hedge, but much more in his own bosom: Rom. vii. 23. "But I see another law in "my members;" and ver. 21. "I find then a law, that when I "would do good, evil is present with me:" q. d. I do not know how others find it, but I am sure I find sin my very bosom, in my very bowels, it is present with me. O wretched man that I am! A gracious soul can mourn to see it in others, but to find it in himself pierceth him to the very heart.

3. *Thirdly*, The gracious soul hates not only this or that particular sin, but the whole kind, every thing that is sinful. True hatred is προς τα γενη, *of the whole nature or kind;' Psal. cxix. 104. "I "hate every false way." His reasonings proceed *a quatenus ad omne*, from sin as sin, concluding against every sin; sins that are profitable and pleasant, as well as sins that have neither profit nor pleasure; sins that are secret, as well as sins that are open, and will defame him.

* Arist. Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 4.

And, before this trial, a false heart cannot stand; for he always indulges some lust: There is an iniquity which he cannot be separated from.

4. *Fourthly*, The sincere soul hates sin with an irreconcileable hatred. There was a time when sin and his soul fell out, but there never will be a time of reconciliation betwixt them again.

That breach, which effectual conviction once made, can never be made up any more: "They will return no more to folly," Psalm lxxxv. 8. And indeed it seems to them that have suffered so much for sin, that have endured so many fears and sorrows for it, the greatest folly in the word to return to sin again: No, they admire the mercy of their escape from sin to their dying day, and never look back upon their former state but with shame and grief.

Ask a convert, Would you be back again where once you were? Would you be among your old companions again? Would you be fulfilling the lusts of the flesh again? And he will tell you, he would not run the hazard to abide one day or one night in that condition again, to gain all the kingdoms of the world the next morning.

5. *Fifthly*, The sincere soul hates sin with a superlative hatred; he hates it more than any other evil in the world besides it. Penal evils are not pleasant in themselves, but yet he must endure them, or sin, then sufferings he chuses; Heb. xi. 25. "Chusing rather to "suffer affliction than enjoy the pleasures of sin;" the worst of sufferings rather than the best of sin.

6. *Sixthly*, To conclude; so deep is the hatred that upright ones bear to sin, that nothing pleases them more than the thoughts of a full deliverance from it doth: Rom. vii. 34. "I thank God, through "Jesus Christ our Lord." What doth he so heartily thank God for? O for a prospect of his final deliverance from sin, never to be entangled, defiled, or troubled with it any more: And this is one thing that sweetens death to the saints as any thing in the world can do, except Christ's victory over it, and lying in the grave for us. To think of a grave, is not pleasant in itself; but to think of a parting-time with sin, that is sweet and pleasant indeed.

SECT. V.

(3.) THIRDLY, The children of God and the children of the devil; pure gold and vile dross are manifest as in hatred of sin, so in their troubles and sorrows about sin.

All trouble for sin argues not sincerity; some have reason to be troubled even for their troubles for sin: So have they,

1. *First*, That are only troubled for the commission of some more gross sins, that startle the natural conscience, but not for inward sins that defile the soul. Judas was troubled for betraying innocent blood, but not for that base lust of covetousness that was the root of it, or the want of sincere love to Jesus Christ; Matth. xxvii. 4, 5. Out-

ward sins are sins *majoris infamiæ*, of greater scandal; but heart-sins are oftentimes *majoris reatus*, sins of greater guilt. To be troubled for grosser sins, and have no trouble for ordinary sins daily incurred, is an ill sign of a bad heart.

2. *Secondly*, A graceless heart may be much troubled at the discovery of sin, when it is not troubled for the guilt of sin; Jer. ii. 26. "As "the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel "ashamed." Hence it is that they stick not to commit ten sins against God, to hide one sin from the eyes of men. It is a mercy that sin is the matter of men's shame, and that all are not arrived to that height of impudence to declare their sin as Sodom, and glory in their shame: But to be ashamed only because men see it, and not with Ezra, to say, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up unto "thee," Ezra ix. 6. ashamed that thou seest it, is but hypocrisy.

3. *Thirdly*, A graceless heart may be troubled for the rod that sin draws after it, but not for sin itself, as it provokes God to inflict rods.

But the troubles of upright ones for sin are of another kind and nature.

1. *First*, They are troubled that God is wronged, and his Spirit troubled by their sins: So the penitent prodigal, "I have sinned "against heaven, and in thy sight," Luke xv. 21. Against heaven, that is, against him whose throne is in heaven, a great, glorious, and infinite Majesty! a poor worm of the earth hath lifted up his hand against the God of heaven.

2. *Secondly*, They are troubled for the defilement of their own souls by sin: Hence they are compared in Proverbs xxv. 26. to a troubled fountain. You know it is the property of a living spring, when any filth falls into it, or that which lies in the bottom of its channel, is raised and defiles its streams, never to leave working until it hath purged itself of it, and recovered its purity again.

So it is with a righteous man, he loves purity in the precept, Psal. cxix. 140. and he loves it no less in the principle and practice: he thinks it is hell enough to lie under the pollution of sin, if he should never come under damnation for it.

3. *Thirdly*, They are troubled for the estrangements of God, and the hidings of his face from them because of their sin. It would go close to an ingenuous spirit to see a dear and faithful friend whom he hath grieved, to look strange and shy upon him at the next meeting, as if he did not know him: much more doth it go to the heart of a gracious man to see the face of God turned from him, and not to be towards him as in times past. This went to David's heart after his fall, as you may see, Psalm li. 11. "Cast me not away from thy "presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" q. d. Lord, if thou turn thy back upon me, and estrange thyself from me, I am a lost man; that is the greatest mischief that can befal me.

4. *Fourthly*, Their troubles for sin run deep to what other men's

do. They are strong to bear other troubles, but sink and faint under this: Psalm xxxviii. 4. Other sorrows may for the present be violent, and make more noise, but this sorrow soaks deeper into the soul.

5. *Fifthly*, Their troubles for sin are more private and silent troubles than others are, "their sore runs in the night," as it is Psal. lxxvii. 2. Not but that they may, and do open their troubles to men (and it is a mercy when they meet with a judicious, tender, and experienced Christian to unbosom themselves unto) but when all is done, it is God and thy soul alone that must whisper out the matter. *Illa vera dolet, qui sine teste dolet:* This is a sincere sorrow for sin indeed, which is expressed secretly to God in the closet.

6. *Sixthly*, Their troubles are incurable by creature-comforts. It is not the removing some outward pressures and inconveniences that can remove their burden; nothing but pardon, peace, and witnessed reconciliation, can quiet the gracious heart.

7. *Seventhly*, Their troubles for sin are ordinate and kept in their own place; they dare not stamp the dignity of Christ's blood upon their worthless tears and groans for sin: * *Lava lachrymas, Domine:* Lord, wash my sinful tears in the blood of Christ, was once the desire of a true penitent. And thus our trouble for sin shews us what our hearts are.

SECT. VI.

(4.) FOURTHLY, The behaviour and carriage of the soul with respect to subjection to the commands of sin, shews what our estate and condition is. This will separate dross from gold. All unregenerate men are the servants of sin, they subject themselves to its commands. This the scripture sometimes calls a "conversation in "the lusts of the flesh," Eph. ii. 3. Sometimes the "selling of "themselves to sin," 1 Kings xxi. 20. Now, as a † judicious divine observes, though the children of God complain with Paul, Rom. vii. 14, 15. that they are "sold under sin," yet there is a vast difference betwixt these two: The saints are sold to it by Adam, but others by their own continued consent. But to shew you the difference in this matter, I conceive it necessary to shew wherein the reigning power of sin doth not consist, and then wherein it doth; that you may plainly discern who are in subjection to the reigning power of their corruptions, and who are not. Now there be divers things common both to the regenerate and unregenerate; and we cannot say the dominion of sin lies in any or in all of them, viz. abstractly and simply considered.

1. *First*, Both one and the other having original corruption dwelling in them, may also find this fountain breaking forth into gross and scandalous sins: But we cannot say that because original corrup-

* August. † Dr. Reynolds.

tion thus breaks forth into gross and scandalous sins in both, therefore it must needs reign in the one as well as in the other; a righteous man may "fall before the wicked," as it is, Prov. xxv. 26. He may fall into the dirt of grosser iniquities, and furnish them with matter of reproach. So did David, Peter, Abraham, and many more of the Lord's upright-hearted ones, whose souls nevertheless sin did not reign over by a voluntary subjection to its commands, nor must this embolden any to sin with more liberty.

2. *Secondly*, Though an upright soul fall once and again into sin, though he reiterate the same act of sin which he hath repented of before; yet it cannot merely from thence be concluded, that therefore sin reigns over him as it doth over a wicked man that makes it his daily trade. I confess every reiteration of sin puts a further aggravation upon it: And it is sad we should repent and sin, and sin and repent; but yet you read, Prov. xxiv. 16. "A just man falleth seven "times, and riseth up again:" Job's friends were good men, yet he tells them, "These ten times have ye reproached me," Job xix. 3. This indeed shews a heart that greatly needs purging; for it is with relapses into spiritual as it is with relapses into natural diseases: A recidivation or return of the disease shews that the morbific matter was not duly purged; but though it shews the foulness, it doth not always prove the falseness of the heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Though the one may be impatient of the reproof of his sin, as well as the other; yet that alone will not conclude sin to be in full dominion over the one as it is over the other.

It is pity any good man should storm at a just rebuke of sin; that such a precious oil as is proper to heal, should be conceited to break his head; but yet flesh will be tender and touchy, even in good men. Asa was a good man, and yet he was wroth with the prophet who reproved him, as you find, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. yet I doubt not but their consciences smite them for it, when pride suffers not another to do it; a reproof may be well-timed and ill managed by another, and so may provoke, but they will hear the voice of conscience in another manner.

4. *Fourthly*, Though in both some one particular sin may have more power than another, yet neither doth this alone conclude, that therefore that sin must reign in one, as it doth in another. Indeed the beloved lust of every wicked man is king over his soul; but yet a godly man's constitution, calling, *&c.* may incline him more to one sin than another; and yet neither that nor any other may be said to be in dominion; for though David speaks of his iniquity, i. e. his special sin, Psal. xviii. 23. which some suppose to be the sin of lying from that intimation, Psal. cxix. 19. yet you see in one place he begs God to keep him from it, and in the other, he tells us he kept himself from it, and both shew he was not the servant of it.

5. *Fifthly*, Though both may sin against knowledge, yet it will not follow from thence, that therefore sins against knowledge must

needs be sins in dominion in the one, as they are in the other: there was too much light abused, and violence offered in David's deliberated sin, as he confesses, Psal. li. 6. and the sad story itself too plainly shews; and yet, in the main, David was an upright man still; though this consideration of the fact shrewdly wounded his integrity, and stands upon record for a caution to all others.

SECT. VII.

WE have seen what doth not infer the dominion of sin in the former particulars, being simply considered; I shall next shew you what doth, and how the sincere and false hearts are distinguished in this trial. And,

1. *First*, Assent and consent upon deliberation notes the soul to be under the dominion of sin: when the mind approves sin, and the will gives its plenary consent to it, this sets up sin in its throne, and puts the soul into subjection to it; for the dominion of sin consists in its authority over us, and our voluntary subjection to it. This you find to be the character of a wicked graceless person, Psal. xxxvi. 4. "He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way "that is not good; he abhorreth not evil."

The best men may fall into sin through mistake, or precipitated into sin through the violence of temptation; but to devise mischief, and and set himself in an evil way, this notes full assent of the mind; and then, *not to abhor evil*, notes full consent of the will; and these two being given to sin, not only antecedently to the acting of it, but also consequently to it, to like it afterwards as well as before; this puts the soul fully under the power of sin? What can it give more?

This (as * one saith) in direct opposition to the apostle, Rom. xii. 1. is to present their bodies a dead sacrifice, unholy, and abominable to God; acceptable to the devil, which is their unreasonable service: all men by nature are given to sin, but these men give themselves to it.

2. *Secondly*, The customary practice of sin subjects the soul to the dominion of sin; and so "he that is born of God doth not commit "sin," 1 John iii. 9. Fall into sin, yea, the same sin he may, and that often; but then it is not without reluctance, repentance, and a protest entered by the soul in heaven against it; so that sin hath not a quiet possession of his soul; he is not the servant of sin, nor doth he willingly walk after its commandments; but so do its own servants: it is their daily practice, Jer. ix. 3. "They proceed from "evil to evil."

3. *Thirdly*, Delight in sin proves the dominion of sin. So the servants of sin are described, Isa. lxvi. 3. "They have chosen their "own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations."

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* Mr. Caryl.

Look, as our delight in God is the measure of our holiness, so our delight in sin is the measure of our sinfulness. Delight in sin is the uppermost round of the ladder, and much higher the soul of a sinner cannot go, till it be turned off into hell; "It is a sport to a fool to do "mischief," Prov. x. 23. Never merrier than when he hath the devil for his playfellow, saith * one upon that place.

4. *Fourthly*, Impatience of Christ's yoke and government, argues the soul to be the subject of sin. This is clear from the apostle's reasoning in Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked that ye were "the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart the form "of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from "sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Where you see plainly, that no man can have his manumission or freedom from sin, that comes not into Christ's service, and yields himself up to his obedience.

So then, to fret at Christ's laws, that tie us up from our lusts, to be weary of all spiritual employments as a burden intolerable, never to be in our element and centre till we are off from God, and plunging in the world and our lusts; this is a sad note of a soul in subjection to sin.

Object. *But may not an upright soul find some weariness in spiritual things?*

Sol. Doubtless he may, for he hath flesh as well as spirit; and though the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak: he is sanctified but in part, and his delight in the law of God is but according to, or *after the inner man*, Rom. vii. 22. But he sees another law in his members, i. e. contrary inclinations. However, if he be weary sometimes in the duties of godliness, to be sure he is more weary out of them, and is not centered and at rest till he be with his God again: but the carnal heart is where it would be, when it is in the service of sin; and as a fish upon dry land, when engaged in spiritual duties; especially such as are secret, and have no external allurements of reputation to engage him to them.

But what surprisals or captivities to sin soever may befal an upright soul, yet it appears by these eight following particulars, that he is not the servant of sin, nor in full subjection to it. For,

1. *First*, Though he may be drawn to sin, yet he cannot reflect upon his sin without shame and sorrow; which plainly shews it to be an involuntary surprize. So Peter wept bitterly, Mat. xxvi. 75. And David mourned for his sin heartily. Others can fetch new pleasures out of their old sins, by reflecting on them; and some can glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19. some are stupid and senseless after sin; and the sorrow of a carnal heart for it, is but a morning dew: but it is far otherwise with God's people.

2. *Secondly*, Though a saint may be drawn to sin, yet it is not with

* Mr. Trap.

a deliberate and full consent of his will; their delight is in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. "They do that which they would not," ver. 16. i. e. there are inward dislikes from the new nature: and as for that case of David, which seems to have so much of counsel and deliberation in it, yet it was but in a single act; it was not in the general course of his life; he was upright in all things, i. e. in the general course and tenor of his life, 1 Kings xv. 5.

3. *Thirdly*, Though an upright soul may fall into sin, yet he is restless and unquiet in that condition, like a bone out of joint; and that speaks him to be none of sin's servants; as on the contrary, if a man be engaged in the external duties of religion, and be restless, and unquiet there, his heart is not in it, he is not at rest till he be again in his earthly business; this man cannot be reckoned Christ's servant: a gracious heart is much after that rate employed in the work of sin, that a carnal heart is employed in the work of religion. That is a good rule, *Ea tantum dicunter inesse, quæ insunt per modum quietis:* That is a man's true temper, wherein he is at rest. Poor David fell into sin, but he had no rest in his bones because of it, Psal. li. 10, 11, 12. If his heart be off from God and duty for a little while, yet he recollects himself, and saith, as Psal. cxvi. 7. "Return to thy rest, O my soul."

4. *Fourthly*, Though a sincere Christian fall into sin and commit evil: yet he proceeds not from evil to evil as the ungodly do, Jer. ix. 3. but makes his fall into one sin a caution to prevent another sin. Peter by his fall got establishment for the time to come. If God will speak peace to them, they are careful to return no more to folly; Psal. lxxxv. 8. "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what "carefulness it wrought? Yea, what fear?" 2 Cor. vii. 11. It is not so with the servants of sin, one sin leaves them much more disposed to another sin.

5. *Fifthly*, A sincere Christian may be drawn to sin, but yet he would be glad with all his heart to be rid of sin: it would be more to him than thousands of gold and silver, that he might grieve and offend God no more; and that shews sin is not in dominion over him: he that is under the dominion of sin, is loth to leave his lusts. Sin's servants are not willing to part with it, they hold it fast, and refuse to let it go, as that text expresseth it, Jer. viii. 5. But the great complaint of the upright is expressed by the apostle according to the true sense of their hearts, in Rom. vii. 24. "Who shall deliver me "from the body of this death?

6. *Sixthly*, It appears they yield not themselves willingly to obey sin, inasmuch as it is the matter of their joy when God orders any providence to prevent sin in them: "Blessed be the Lord, (said David "to Abigail) and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou that hast "kept me this day from shedding blood," 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33.

Here is blessing upon blessing for a sin-preventing providence. The author is blessed, the instrument blessed, the means blessed. O it is

a blessed thing in the eyes of a sincere man to be kept from sin! he reckons it a great deliverance, a very happy escape, if he be kept from sin.

7. *Seventhly*, This shews that some who may be drawn to commit sin, yet are none of the servants of sin, that they do heartily beg the assistance of grace to keep them from sin: "Keep back thy servant "from presumptuous sins, (saith the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 13. let "them not have dominion over me;" q. d. Lord, I find propensions to sin in my nature, yea, and strong ones too; if thou leave me to myself, I am carried into sin as easily as a feather down the torrent. "O Lord, keep back thy servant." And there is no petition that upright ones pour out their hearts to God in, either more frequently or more ardently than in this, to be kept back from sin.

8. *Eighthly, and Lastly*, This shews the soul not to be under the dominion of sin, that it doth not only cry to God to be kept back from sin, but uses the means of prevention himself; he resists it, as well as prays against it; Psal. xviii. 23. "I was also upright before "him, and kept myself from mine iniquity:" So Job xxxi. 1. "I "have made a covenant with mine eyes;" and yet more fully in Isa. xxxiii. 15. "He shaketh his hands from holding bribes, and "stoppeth his hears from hearing blood, and shutteth his eyes from "seeing evil." See with what care the portals are shut at which sin useth to enter. All these things are very relieving considerations to poor souls questioning their integrity under the frequent surprisals of sin. And the next trial no less.

SECT. VIII.

(5.) FIFTHLY, Our opposition to, and conflicts with sin discover what we are, gold or dross.

There are conflicts with sin in both the regenerate, and in the unregenerate; but there is a vast difference betwixt them, as will appear in the following account.

1. *First*, There is an universal, and there is a particular opposition to sin: the former is found in regenerate, the latter in unregenerate souls: a gracious heart hates every false way, Psal. cxix. 104. and must needs do so, because he hates and opposes sin as sin; so that he can have no *peccatum in deliciis*, no excepted or reserved lust, but fights against the whole body, and every limb and member of the body of sin.

But it is not so with the hypocrite or carnal professor; he hath overcome some reserved sin, that he cannot part with.

2. *Secondly*, There is an opposition betwixt the new nature and sin, and there is an opposition betwixt a natural conscience and sin; the former is the case of an upright soul, the latter may be a self-deceiver.

A regenerate person opposeth sin because there is an irreconcileable

antipathy betwixt it and the new nature in him, as is clear from Gal. v. 17. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against "the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." By flesh, understand corrupt nature; by spirit, not only the spirit of man but the Spirit of God, or principle of regeneration in man. By the lusting of these two against each other, understand the desire and endeavours of each other's destruction and ruin; and the ground of all this is the contrariety of all these two natures.

These are contrary one to the other; there is a twofold opposition betwixt them, one formal, their very natures are opposite; the other effective, their workings and designs are opposite, as it is betwixt fire and water.

But the opposition found in unrenewed souls against sin, is not from their natures, for sin is suitable enough to that; but from the light that is in their minds and consciences, which scares and terrifies them. Such was that in Darius, Dan. vi. 14. "He was sore "displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver "him; and laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him." Here the contest was betwixt sense of honour upon one side, and conviction of conscience on the other side.

Sometimes a generous and noble disposition opposes sordid and base actions: *Major sum, et ad majora natus; quam ut corporis mei sim mancipium.* I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body, said a brave heathen.

3. *Thirdly*, There is a permanent, and there is a transient opposition to sin; the former is the case of God's people, the latter of temporary and unsound professors.

The saint when he draws the sword in this warfare against sin, throws away the scabbard; no end of this combat with sin till life end; their life and their troubles are finished together; 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought the good fight, and have finished my course."

But in other men it is but a transient quarrel; out with sin one day, and in another; and the reason is plain by what was noted before: it is not the opposition of two natures; it is like the opposition of the wind and tide, these may be contrary and make a stormy sea to-day, but the wind may come about, and go as the tide goes tomorrow; but in a Christian it is the opposition of the river and the dam, one must give way to the other, there is no reconciling them; but the other "like the dog, returns to his vomit," 2 Pet. ii. ult.

4. *Fourthly*, There is an opposition to the root of sin, and an opposition to the fruits of sin. A gracious soul opposeth root and fruit, but others the latter only. The great design of an upright soul is not only to lop off this or that branch, but to kill the root of sin, which is in his nature; Rom. vii. 24. "Who shall deliver me from the "body of this death?" But the great care and endeavours of others is to suppress outward acts of sin, and escape the mischievous consequences of it: Yea, their study is, as Lactantius phraseth it, *Potius*

abscondere, quam abscindere vitia: To hide, rather than to kill their lusts.

5. *Fifthly*, There is an opposition to sin *in the strength of God*, and an opposition to sin in our own strength; the former is proper to real Christians, the latter is found frequently with unsanctified persons; when a Christian goes forth against any sin, it is in the strength of God: so you read their rule directs them, Eph. vi. 10. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: take unto "you the whole armour of God:" And suitably, you shall find them frequently upon their knees begging strength from heaven against their lusts; 2 Cor. xii. 8. "For this cause I besought the Lord "thrice," saith Paul, i. e. often and earnestly, that the temptation might depart from him.

But others go forth against sin only in the strength of their own resolutions; so did Pendleton in our story; these resolutions, or vows, which they have put themselves under, are as frequently frustrated as made.

6. *Sixthly*, There is a successful opposition to sin, and an opposition that comes to nothing: The former is that of true Christians, the latter is found among unregenerate men.

The work of mortification in the saints is progressive and increasing: Hence Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified with him, that "the body of sin might be destroyed." Sin dies in believers much as crucified persons use to die, viz. a slow, lingering, gradual, but sure death; its vigour and life expires by degrees, or as a consumptive person dies; for to that also he alludes here: There is a disease, which is called *consumptio totius*, a consumption of the whole; and those that die of that disease, languish more and more, till at last they drop *sensim sine sensu*, by imperceptible degrees and steps into the grave.

But in the unregenerate, whatever conflicts they have with sin, no corruption falls before it: It may be said of them, as the church in another case complains of herself, Isa. xxvi. 18. "We have been "in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind. We have not "wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants "of the world fallen." So it fares with these professors; they pray, they hear, they vow, they resolve, but when all is done, their lusts are as strong and vigorous as ever: No degree of mortification appears after all.

And thus much of the trial of our sincerity by our carriage towards sin.

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what proof or trial is made of the soundness, or unsoundness of our graces by the duties of religion which we perform.

SECT. I.

WE now come (according to the method proposed) to make trial of the truth or falseness of grace, by the duties we daily perform in religion. And certainly they also have the use and efficacy of fire for the discovery, 1 John ii. 4, 5. "He that saith I know him, and "keepeth not his commandments [is a liar] and the truth is not in "him: But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God "perfected: And hereby know we that we are in him."

This is a practical lie, of which the apostle speaks here; by which men deceive others for a while, and themselves for ever; a lie not spoken, but done, when a man's course of life contradicts his profession. The life of an hypocrite is but one longer or continued lie; he saith or professeth he knows God, but takes no care at all to obey him in the duties he commands; he either neglects them, or if he performs them, it is not as God requires: "If they draw nigh to him "with their lips, yet their heart is far from him," Isa. xxix. 13. "Thou art near in their mouth, but far from their reins," Jer. xii. 2.

There are some that feel the influence and power of their communion with the Lord in duties, going down into their very reins: And there are others whose lips and tongues only are touched with religion.

This is an age of light and much profession: Men cannot now keep up a reputation in the sober and professing world, whilst they let down, and totally neglect the duties of religion: but surely, if men would be but just to themselves, their very performances of duty would tell them what their hearts are.

SECT. II.

FOR there are, among others, these following particulars, that do very clearly difference the sound from the unsound professor.

1. *First*, The designs and true levels and aims of men's heart in duty will tell them what they are.

An hypocrite aims low; Hos. vii. 14. "They have not cried "unto me with their heart when they howled upon their beds; they "assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me." It is not Christ and pardon, for mortification and holiness, but for corn and wine; thus they make a market of religion; all their ends in duty are either carnal, natural, or legal; either to accommodate their carnal ends, or satisfy and quiet their consciences; and so their duties are performed as a sin-offering to God.

But an upright heart hath very high and pure aims in duty; "The "desire of their soul is to God." Isa. xxvi. 8. "Their soul follows "hard after God," Psal. lxiii. 8. "One thing have I desired of the "Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the "Lord all the days of my life, to see the beauty of the Lord, and to "enquire in his temple," Psal. xxvii. 4. These are the true eagles that play at the sun, and will not stoop to low and earthly objects. Alas! If the enjoyment of God be missed in a duty, it is not the greatest enlargement of gifts will satisfy; he comes back like a man that hath taken a long journey to meet his friend upon important business, and lost his labour; his friend was not there.

2. *Secondly*, The engagements of men's hearts to God in duties will tell them what they are; the hypocrite takes little heed to his heart, Isa. xxix. 13. They are not afflicted really for the hardness, deadness, unbelief and wanderings of their hearts in duty, as upright ones are: nor do they engage their hearts, and labour to get them up with God in duty, as his people do. "I have entreated thy fa-"vour with my whole heart," saith David, Psal. cxix. 58. They are not pleased in duty until they feel their hearts stand towards God like a bow in its full bent. I say, it is not always so with them; what would they give that it might be so? But, surely, if their souls in duty be empty of God, they are filled with trouble and sorrow.

3. *Thirdly*, The conscience that men make of secret, as well as public duties, will tell them what their hearts and graces are; whether true or false. A vain professor is curious in the former, and either negligent, or, at best, formal in the latter; for he finds no inducements of honour, applause, or ostentation of gifts, externally moving him to them; nor hath he any experience of the sweetness and benefit of such duties internally to allure and engage his soul to them.

The hypocrite therefore is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Matth. vi. 5, 6. Not but that education, example, or the impulse of conscience, may sometimes drive him thither; but it is not his daily delight to be there; his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world to enjoy God in secret. It is the observation of their duties is the great inducement to these men to perform them; and, *verily*, saith our Lord, ver. 2. "they have their reward," *απεχουσι*, they have it away, or they have carried off all the benefit and advantage that ever they shall have by religion. Much good may it do them with their applause and honour, let them make much of that airy reward, for it is all that ever they shall have.

But now for a soul truly gracious, he cannot long subsist without secret prayer. It is true, there is not always an equal freedom and delight, a like enlargement and comfort in those retirements; but yet he cannot be without them; he finds the want of his secret, in his public duties: If he and his God have not met in secret, and had

some communion in the morning, he sensibly finds it in the deadness and unprofitableness of his heart and life all the day after.

4. *Fourthly*, The spirituality of our duties tries the sincerity of our graces: An unregenerate heart is carnal, whilst engaged in duties that are spiritual. Some men deceive themselves in thinking they are spiritual men, because their employments and calling is about spiritual things, Hosea ix. 7. This indeed gives them the denomination, but not the frame of spiritual men; and others judge themselves spiritual persons, because they frequently perform and attend upon spiritual duties: But, alas, the heart and state may be carnal notwithstanding all this. O, my friends, it is not enough that the object of your duties be spiritual, that they respect an holy God; nor that the matter be spiritual, that you be conversant about holy things; but the frame of your heart must be spiritual; an heavenly temper of soul is necessary, and what are the most heavenly duties without it?

The end and design you aim at must be spiritual, the enjoyment of God, and a growing conformity to him in holiness; else multiply duties as the sand on the sea-shore, and they all will not amount to one evidence of your sincerity. "God is my witness whom I serve "with my spirit," saith the apostle, Rom. i. 9. He seems to appeal to God in this matter. I serve God in my spirit, and God knows that I do so; I dare appeal to him that it is so; he knows that my heart is with him, or would be with him in my duties: The arms of my faith do either sensibly grasp, or are stretched out towards him in my duties. O how little favour do gracious hearts find in the most excellent duties, if God and their souls do not sensibly meet in them!

Certainly, reader, there is a time when God comes nigh to men in duty, when he deals familiarly with men, and sensibly fills their souls with unusual powers and delights. The near approaches of God to their souls are felt by them, (for souls have their senses as well as bodies) and now are their minds abstracted and marvellously refined from all that is material and earthly, and swallowed up in spirtual excellencies and glories.

These are the real prelibations, or foretastes of glory, which no man can by words, make another to understand, as he himself doth that feels them.

These seasons, I confess, do but rarely occur to the best of Christains, nor continue long when they do: * Alas! this wine is too strong for such weak bottles as we are. 'Hold, Lord, (an holy man 'said once,) it is enough, thy poor creature is a clay vessel, and can 'hold no more:' This is that joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which is mentioned, 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. Something that words cannot

* It is a sweet hour, and it is but an hour, (a thing of short continuance:) The relish of it is exceeding sweet, but is not often that Christians taste it. *Bernard.*

describe. These seasons are the golden spots of our lives, when we are admitted to these near and ineffable views and tastes of God: Possibly some poor Christians can say but little to these things; their sorrows are exercised in duties more than their joys; they are endeavouring to mount, but the stone hangs at the heel; they essay, but cannot rise to that height that others do, who are got up by their labouring faith into the upper region, and there display their wings, and sing in the sun-beams: But though they cannot reach this height, yet have they no satisfaction in duties wherein there is no intercourse betwixt God and their souls.

That which contents another, will not content a Christian. If the king be absent, men will bow to the empty chair: but if God be absent, an empty duty gives no satisfaction to a gracious spirit. The poorest Christian is found panting after God by sincere desires, and labouring to get up that dead and vain heart to God in duty, (though, alas! it is many times but the rolling of the returning stone against the hill) yet he never expects advantage by that duty wherein the Spirit of God is not; nor doth he expect the Spirit of God should be where his own spirit is not.

5. *Fifthly*, Assiduity and constancy in the duties of religion make a notable discovery of the soundness or rottenness of men's hearts. The hypocrite may shew some zeal and forwardness in duties for a time, but he will jade and give out at length; Job xxvii. 10. "Will "he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon "God?" No, he will not. If his motions in religion were natural, they would be constant; but they are artificial, and he is moved by external inducements, and so must needs be off and on; he prays himself weary of praying, and hears himself weary of hearing: His heart is not delighted in his duties, and therefore his duties must needs grow stale and dry to him after a while. There be three seasons in which the zeal of an hypocrite may be inflamed in duties.

First, When some imminent danger threatens him; some smart rod of God is shaken over him; "When he slew them, then they "sought him, and returned and enquired early after God," Psalm lxxviii. 34. O the goodly words they give, the fair promises they make! and yet all the while "they do but flatter him with "their lips, and lie unto him with their tongues," ver. 36, 37. for let but that danger pass over, and the heavens clear up again, and he will restrain prayer, and return to his old course again.

Secondly, When the times countenance and favour religion, and the wind is in his back, O what zeal will he have for God! So in the stony ground, Matth. xiii. 5. the seed sprung up and flourished until the sun of persecution arose, and then it faded away, for it had no depth of earth, no deep solid inward work or principle of grace to maintain it.

Thirdly, When self ends and designs are accommodated and promoted by these things. This was the case of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16.

"Come, see my zeal;" for what? For a base self-interest, not for God. How fervently will some men pray, preach, and profess, whilst they sensibly feel the incomes and profits of these duties to their flesh; whilst they are admired and applauded!

These external incentives will put an hypocrite into an hot fit of zeal; but then, as it is with a man, whose colours are raised by the heat of the fire, and not by the healthfulness of a good constitution, it soon fades and fails again.

But, blessed be God, it is not so with all: The man whose heart is upright with his God, will "keep judgment, and do righteousness "at all times," Psal. cvi. 3. Whether dangers threaten or no; whether the times favour religion or no; whether his earthly interest be promoted by it or no, he will be holy still, he will not part with his duties when they are stript naked of those external advantages; as the addition of these things to religion did not at first engage him, so the subtraction of them cannot disengage him.

If his duty become his reproach, yet Moses will not forsake it, Heb. xi. 26. If he lose his company, and be left alone, yet Paul will not flinch from his duty, 2 Tim. iv. 16. If hazard surround duty on every side, yet Daniel will not quit it, Dan. vi. 10. for they considered these things at first, and counted the cost; they still find religion is rich enough to pay the cost of all that they can lose, or suffer for its sake; yea, and that with an hundred-fold reward now in this life. They never had any other design in engaging in religious duties, but to help them to heaven; and if they recover heaven at last, whether the way to it prove better or worse, they have their design and ends; and therefore they will be stedfast, "always abounding in the work "of the Lord, as knowing their labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. ult.

6. *Sixthly*, The humility and self-denial of our hearts in duties, will try what they are for their integrity and sincerity towards God. Doth a man boast in his own excellencies in prayer, as the Pharisee did, Luke xviii. 10, 11. "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men:" Which he speaks not in an humble acknowledgment of the grace of God which differences man from man, but in a proud ostentation of his own excellencies. Doth a man make his duties his saviours, and trust to them in a vain confidence of their worth and dignity? Luke xviii. 9. Surely, "his heart, which is thus lifted up within him, is "not upright, Hab. ii. 4. But if the heart be upright indeed, it will express its humility, as in all other things, so especially in its duties wherein it approaches the great and holy God.

First, It will manifest its humility in those awful and reverential apprehensions it hath of God, as Abraham did, Gen. xviii. 27. "And now, I that am but dust and ashes, (saith he) have taken "upon me to speak unto God." The humility of Abraham's spirit is, in some measure, to be found in all Abraham's children.

Secondly, In those low and vile thoughts they have of themselves

and their religious performances: Thus that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. stood behind Christ weeping: "Yet the dogs eat the crumbs," saith another, Mark vii. 28. "I am more brutish than any man," saith a third, Prov. xxx. 7. "I abhor myself in dust and ashes," saith a fourth, Job xlii. 6. and as little esteem they have for their performances, Isa. lxiv. 6. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy "rags." I deny not but there is pride and vanity in the most upright ones; but what place soever it finds in their converses with men, it finds little room in their converses with God, or if it doth, they loath it, and themselves for it.

Thirdly, But especially their humility in duty is discovered in renouncing all their duties in point of dependence, and relying entirely upon Christ for righteousness and acceptance: They have special regard to duties in point of obedience, but none at all in point of reliance.

7. *Seventhly*, The communion and intercourse which is betwixt God and men in duties, notably discovers what their persons and graces are. And it must needs do so, because what communion soever the hypocrite hath with duties, or with saints in duties, to be sure he hath none with God.

None can come nigh to God in duty, but those that are made nigh by reconciliation: All special communion with Christ is founded in real union with Christ; but "the wicked are estranged from the "womb," Psalm lviii. 3.

But now there is real communion betwixt God and his people in duties. Truly our fellowship, κοινωνια, our communion is with the Father and Son, 1 John i. 3. God pours forth of his Spirit upon them, and they pour forth their hearts to God. It is sensibly manifested to them when the Lord comes nigh to their souls in duty, and as sensible they are of his retreats and withdrawments from their souls, Cant. iii. 1, 4. They find their hearts, like the heliotrope, open and shut according to the accesses and recesses of the divine presence. They that never felt any thing of this nature, may call it a fancy, but the Lord's people are abundantly satisfied of the reality thereof.

Their very countenance is altered by it, 1 Sam. i. 18. the sad and cloudy countenance of Hannah cleared up, there was fair weather in her face, as soon as she knew she had audience and acceptance with her God. I know all communion with God doth not consist in joys and comforts; there is a real communion with God in the mortifying and humbling influences of his Spirit upon men, as in the cheering and refreshing influences thereof. I know also there is a great diversity in the degrees and measures thereof: It is not alike in all Christians, nor with the same Christian at all times. But that real Christians have true and real communion with God in their duties, is a truth as manifest in spiritual sense and experience of the saints, as their communion is one with another.

8. *Eighthly*, Growth and improvement of grace in duties, notably

differences the sound and the unsound heart. All the duties in the world will never make an hypocrite more holy, humble or heavenly than he is: but will, as the watering of a dry stick, sooner rot it, than make it flourishing and fruitful. What was Judas the better for all those heavenly sermons, prayers, and discourses of Christ which he heard? And what will thy soul be the better for all the duties thou performest weekly and daily, if thy heart be unsound? It is plain, from Job xv. 4. there must be an implantation into Christ, before there can be an improvement in fruitful obedience. And it is as plain, from 1 John ii. 14. that the virtues of ordinances must remain; the efficacy and power that we sometimes feel under them, must abide and remain in the heart afterwards, or we cannot grow, and be made fruitful by them.

But the false professor is neither rooted in Christ by union with him, nor doth, or can retain the virtue of ordinances within him; but, like one that views his face in a glass, quickly forgets what manner of man he was: his head indeed may grow, his knowledge may increase, but he hath a dead and withered heart.

But as the saints have real communion with God in duties, so they do make improvements answerable thereunto: There is more certainly a ripening of their graces that way; a changing or gradual transformation from glory to glory; a springing up to that full stature of the man in Christ. "They that are planted in the house of "the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God," Psal. xcii. 13, 14. There is pure and sincere milk in the breasts of ordinances; a believer sucks the very breasts of Christ in his duties, and doth grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. they do grow more and more judicious, experienced, humble, mortified, and heavenly, by conversing with the Lord so frequently in his appointments.

There is, I confess, a more discernible growth and ripening in some Christians, than in others: The faith of some groweth exceedingly, 2 Thess. i. 3. others more slowly, Heb. v. 12. but yet there are improvements of grace in all upright ones: habits are more deeply radicated, or fruits of obedience more increased.

Object. *If any upright soul be stumbled at this, as not being able to discern the increase of his graces, after all his duties.*

Sol. Let such consider the growth of grace is discerned as the growth of plants is, which we perceive rather *crevisse, quam crescere;* to have grown, than to grow: Compare time past and present, and you may see it; but usually our eager desires after more, make us overlook what we have as nothing.

9. *Ninthly,* The assistance and influences of the Spirit in duties, shew us what we are; no vital sanctifying influences can fall upon carnal hearts in duties: The Spirit helps not their infirmities, nor makes intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered, as he doth for his own people, Rom. viii. 26, 27. They have his assistances in the way of common *gifts,* but not in the way of special

grace: He may enable them to preach judiciously, not experimentally; to pray orderly and neatly, not feelingly, believingly, and broken-heartedly; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, "they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. He never so assists but where he hath first sanctified. Carnal men furnish the materials of their duties out of the strength of their parts: a strong memory, a good invention are the fountains which they draw.

But it is otherwise with souls truly gracious; they have ordinarily a threefold assistance from the Spirit in reference to their duties.

First, Before duties, exciting them to it, making them feel their need of it, like the call of an empty stomach; Psalm xxvii. 8. "Thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart answered, Thy face, Lord, "will I seek."

Secondly, In their duties, furnishing both matter and affection, as in that text lately cited, Rom. viii. 26. guiding them not only what to ask, but how to ask.

Thirdly, After their duties, helping them not only to suppress the pride and vanity of their spirits, but also to wait on God for the accomplishment of their desires.

Now, though all these things, wherein the sincerity of our hearts is tried in duties, be found in great variety (as to degrees) among saints, yet they are mysteries unknown by experience to other men.

CHAP. VIII.

Opening the trials of sincerity and hypocrisy, by sufferings upon the account of religion.

SECT. I.

WE are now arrived at the last trial of grace propounded, viz. by sufferings for religion.

Thousands of hypocrites embark themselves in the profession of religion in a calm; but if the wind riseth, and the sea rageth, and they see religion will not transport them safely to the cape of their earthly hopes and expectations, they desire to be landed again as soon as may be; for they never intended to ride out a storm for Christ: So you find, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. "He endureth for a while: "but when tribulation of persecution ariseth because of the word, by "and by he is offended."

But yet it is not every trial by sufferings that separates gold from dross; and therefore my business will be to shew,

1. *First*, When the fire of sufferings and persecutions is hot and vehement enough to separate them.

2. *Secondly*, Why it must needs discover hypocrisy when it is at that height.

3. *Thirdly*, What advantages sincere grace hath to endure that severe and sharp trial.

SECT. II.

1. NOW the fire of persecution, or sufferings for religion, may be judged intense, and high enough to separate gold and dross;

First, When religion exposes us to imminent hazard of our deepest and dearest interests in this world: Such are our liberties, estates, and lives: Then it is a fierce and fiery trial indeed. Sometimes it exposes the liberties of its professors, Rev. ii. 10. "The "devil shall cast some of you into prison. Sometimes their estates, Heb. x. 34. ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods:" and sometimes their lives, Heb. xi. 37. "They were stoned, they were sawn "asunder, they were slain with the sword." Whilst it goes no higher than some small inconveniencies of life, reputation and sense of honour will hold a false heart; but when it comes to this, few will be found able to endure it, but those that expect to save no more by religion but their souls, and account themselves in good case, if they can but save them with the loss of all that is dear to them in this world.

Here the false heart boggles; here it usually jades and faulters.

Secondly, The fiery trial is then high, when there remains no visible hopes of deliverance, or outward encouragements to sense, that the scene will alter. When "we see not our signs, there is no "more any prophet, nor any that can tell us how long," as the case with the church was, Psal. lxxiv. 9. Then their hands hang down, and their hearts faint: Nor is it to be wondered at, when the length of troubles prove so sore a temptation even to the upright, to put forth their hands to iniquity; as it is Psal. cxxv. 3. If such a temptation shake such men as build on the rock, it must quite overturn those whose foundation is but sand.

Thirdly, When a false professor is engaged alone in sufferings, and is singled out from the herd, as a deer to be run down, now it is a thousand to one but he quits religion to save himself: Good company will encourage a faint-hearted traveller to jog on a great way; but if he be forsaken by all, as Paul was, no man to stand by him; if left alone, as Elijah was, what can encourage him to hold out?

Indeed, if they had the same visible supports those good men had, that the Lord was with them, that would keep them steady; but wanting that encouragement from within, and all shrinking away from without, they quickly tire downright.

Fourthly, When near relations and intimates oppose and tempt us. The prophet speaks of a time "when a man's enemies shall be the "men of his own house; it may be the wife of his bosom, Micah vii. 5, 6. O what a trial is that which Christ mentions in Luke xiv. 26.

when we must hate father and mother, wife and children, or quit claim to Christ and heaven! This is hard work indeed.

How hard did that truly noble and renowned Galeacius Carracciolus find this! O what a conflict found he in his bowels! Now Christ and our dearest interest come to meet like two men upon a narrow bridge; if one go forward, the other must go back, and now the predominate interest can no longer be concealed.

Fifthly, When powerful temptations are mixed with cruel sufferings; when we are strongly tempted, as well as cruelly persecuted: This blows up the fire to a vehement height. This was the trial of those precious primitive believers, Heb. xi. 35, 37. "They were "stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted." Here was life, liberty, and preferment set upon one hand, and death in the most formidable shape upon the other. This cannot but be a great trial to any, but especially when a cruel death and tender temper meet, then the trial goes high indeed.

SECT. III.

2. AND that such sufferings as these will discover the falseness and rottenness of men's hearts cannot be doubted: If you consider that this is the fire designed by God, for this very use and purpose, to separate the gold from the dross: so you will find it, 1 Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to "try you," i. e. the very design and aim of providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. The design of Satan is to destroy you; but God's design is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of persecution (in a suitable notion) called "the hour of "temptation or probation," Rev. iii. 10. for then professors are sifted to the very bran; searched to the very bottom principles. "This "is the day that burns as an oven, in which all the proud, and all "that do wickedly, shall be as stubble," Mal. iv. 1. For,

1. *First*, In that day the predominant interest must appear, and be discovered: It can be concealed no longer; "No man can serve two "masters," saith Christ, Luke xvi. 13. A man may serve many masters, if they all command the same things, or things subordinate to each other; but he cannot serve two masters, if their commands clash and interfere with each other: And such are the commands of Christ and the flesh in a suffering hour. Christ saith, "Be thou "faithful to the death;" the flesh saith, *Spare thyself*, and secure the comforts of life. Christ saith, "He that loveth father or mother, "wife, or children, lands or inheritance more than me, is not worthy "of me." Flesh saith, *He that will grieve and break the heart of such dear relations, and forsake, when he might keep such earthly accommodations, is not worthy of them.*

Thus the two interests come in full opposition: and now have but patience to wait a little, and you shall discern what is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and

you know not which of the two is his master; stay but a little till their path parts, and then you shall quickly see who is his master: So is it in this case.

2. *Secondly*, In that day sensible supports fail, and all a man's relief comes in by the pure and immediate actings of faith; and were it not for those reliefs, his heart would soon faint and die away under discouragements, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "We faint not whilst we look "not at the things which are seen, for they are temporal, but at the "things which are not seen, for they are eternal," q. d. If we keep not our eye intently fixed upon the invisible and eternal things in the coming world, we shall feel ourselves fainting and dying away under the many troubles and afflictions of this world. "I had fainted "(saith holy David) if I had not believed." How then suppose ye shall the hypocrite live at such a time, who hath no faith to support him? No relief but what comes in through the senses?

3. *Thirdly*, In that day all mere notions and speculations about religion vanish; and nothing relieves and satisfies the suffering soul but what it really believes, and what it hath satisfying proof and experience of in himself. There are a great many pretty and pleasing notions which our minds are entertained with; some delight in times of peace, which can do us no service at all in the day of trouble! and for your speculative, unpractical knowledge of the greatest truths in religion, as little service is to be expected from them: Except we have better evidence and security about them, we shall be loth to venture all upon the credit of them.

That is a very considerable passage to that purpose in Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, (knowing in yourselves) "that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring substance." This *knowing in yourselves* is by inward and sensible experience, taste and feeling, which is abundantly satisfying to the soul; and stands opposed to all that traditional knowledge we receive from others; which, as it leaves the mind fluctuating, so the heart also dead and comfortless.

4. *Fourthly*, In that day the root and foundation of a man's faith and hope is tried, and then they that have built upon the sand must needs fail; for every thing is as its foundation; principles are to us what a root is to a tree, or a foundation to a house; a flaw or grand defect there most assuredly ruins all. This we find to be the very scope of those two famous parables, Luke xiv. 25. and Matth. xiii. 21. Lesser troubles shake but the branches, but these try the very root; if nothing be found there but self-ends; the force of education, and the influence of examples, surely when the winds rise high, and beat upon it, they will quickly lay the loftiest professor even with the ground.

And thus you see what a crisis an hour of temptation, the suffering hour is, and what discoveries of hypocrisy it must needs make; for

now the hypocrite, like Orpah, will forsake religion; but sincerity will make the soul cleave to it, as Ruth did to Naomi.

SECT. IV.

3. WHAT advantages sincerity gives the soul for its establishment and perseverance in suffering times, I shall briefly account for in the following particulars.

1. *First*, Sincere godliness dethrones that idol, the love of this world, in all true Christians; and this is it that makes men shrink and flinch from Christ in a day of suffering. I do not deny but even believers themselves love the world too much; but they love it not as their chief good: it is not their portion or happiness; if any man so love the world, "the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. How much soever a sincere Christian loves the world, yet still it is in subordination to the love of God, John xxi. 15. Sincerity can consist with no other love of the world; it will not suffer such a cursed plant to grow under its shadow.

Now, what is it, but this inordinate, supreme love of the creature, that makes men forsake Christ in time of temptation? This was the ruin of that young man, Mat. xix. 22. "He went away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions." This was the overthrow of Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. "He hath forsaken me, (saith the apostle) having "loved this present world." The love of this world, like sap in green wood, will not suffer you to burn for Christ; get but the heart mortified to the creature by a discovery of better things in heaven, and it will establish and fix your spirits, that it shall not be in the power of creatures to shake you off from Christ your foundation.

2. *Secondly*, Sincerity knits the soul to Christ, and union with him secures us in the greatest trials; *Minimur quatenus unimur.* The hypocrite having no union with Christ, can have no communion with him, nor communications of grace from him; and so that little stock of his own being quickly spent (I mean natural courage and resolution) and no incomes from Christ, he must needs give up in a short time. But it is with a believer in a day of trouble, as it is with a garrison besieged by land, but free and open to the sea, whence fresh supplies are daily sent in to relieve it: See 2 Cor. i. 5. "As the "sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abound-"eth by Christ; fresh aids and daily supplies proportionable to our expences and decays of strength: So Col. i. 11. "Strengthened with "all might in the inner-man, according to his glorious power, unto "all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." And this is the believer's great advantage by his union with Christ in a day of trial.

3. *Thirdly*, As sincerity unites the soul with Christ, so it sets the heart upon heaven, and things eternal; Col. iii. 1, *&c.* Surely nothing is more conducive to our stability than this, in the hour of temptation.

This is the most effectual preservative from temptations upon the right hand, and upon the left. Moses could cast a kingdom at his

heels, despise the riches, pleasures, and honours of Egypt, whilst his eye was fixed upon him that is invisible, and had respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. And it was a brave reply of the forty martyrs to Valence the emperor, tempting them with the preferments and honours of the world, 'Why offer ye these 'trifles to us, when you know how the whole world is contemned 'by us?' And for temptations on the left hand, how little can they move that soul, who realizes the glory of the approaching world, and sees the afflictions and sufferings of this world preparing him for, and hastening him to the enjoyment of it: temptations meet with but cold entertainment from such souls.

4. *Fourthly*, Sincerity drives but one design, and that is to please and enjoy God: and what can more establish and fix the soul in the hour of temptation than this? The reason why the hypocrite is unstable in all his ways, is given us by the apostle James, i. 8. He is a double-minded man, διψυχος ανηρ, a man of two souls in one body; as a profane wretch once boasted, that he had one soul for God, and another for any thing. But all the designs of a gracious heart are united in one; and so the entire stream of his affections runs strong.

It is base by-ends and self-interests, that, like a great many ditches cut out of the bank of a river, draw away the stream out of its proper channel, and make its waters fail. But if the heart be united for God, as the expression is, Psalm lxxxvi. 11. then we may say of such a Christian as was said of a young Roman, *Quicquid vult, valde vult;* What he doth is done with all his might. And this was the ground of that saying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii:* A man of one only design, puts to all his strength to carry it; nothing can stand before him.

5. *Fifthly*, Sincerity brings a man's will into subjection to the will of God; and this being done, the greatest danger and difficulty is over with such a man. This is that holy oil which makes the wheels of the soul run nimbly, even in difficult paths of obedience; *Non tardat uncta rota.* Let but a man be once brought to that, "The will "of the Lord be done," as it is Acts xxi. 13. to see the highest reason of cheerful obedience in the holy, just, and good will of God, and then all the difficulty is over; he can suffer quietly what men inflict unjustly.

6. *Sixthly*, Sincerity takes its measures of present things by the rules of faith and eternity; it goes not by the same reckoning and account that others do, who judge of things by sense, and the respects they have to the present world, 2 Cor. iv. 18. "We look not at the "things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen;" and this is there given as the reason of his not fainting under present difficulties: So, Rom. viii. 18. "I reckon that the sufferings of the present "times are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall "be revealed in us." He will not allow himself to undervalue eternal glory, by once mentioning present sufferings, in a way of bemoan-

ing himself for them: A steady eye upon the other world makes us more than conquerors over the troubles of this world.

7. *Seventhly*, To conclude; sincerity alone hath all the heavenly aids and assistances to stability, and perseverance in suffering times: upright ones (and such only) have Christ's intercession in heaven for them, Rom. viii. 34. The Spirit's consolation in all their troubles, 1 Pet. iv. 14. The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on them: the beneficial ministry of angels, who are sent forth upon their account, Heb. i. 14. *A stock of prayers*, going up from them all the world over, Eph. vi. 18. Multitudes of precious promises in the scriptures; for every line, word, and syllable of which the faithfulness of God stands engaged: so that it is impossible such gold can perish in the fire.

And thus of the several ways by which grace is here tried.

CHAP. IX.

Opening the designs and ends of God, in bringing the professors of religion into such various trials of their graces in this world.

SECT. I.

THESE are some of the ways and methods in which God brings his gold to the touchstone, and to the fire, even in this world, before the awful and solemn trial they must come to in the final judgment: and if we desire to be satisfied what the design or end of God in making such probations of his people is,

We must conclude, in the general, he certainly designs his own glory, and his people's advantage and profit in them. If he suffer them to be tried by reproaches, *happy are they, the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on them*; there is their profit; and though his name be evil spoken of, yet in the meekness of their spirits *he is glorified*, as it is, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "If the scourge slay suddenly, he laugheth at the "trial of the innocent," Job ix. 23. Not at their afflictions, but at the effects and blessed issues and results of them: Not that it gives them pain, but that it gives them glory. Upon this account the apostle bids us count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations or trials: and still the more trials the more joy; for thereby God will produce such effects as are more precious than gold that perisheth, 1 Pet. i. 7. O who can value the comfort that is tasted by the soul upon the trial and discovery of its sincerity, when after some sore temptation wherein God hath helped us to maintain our integrity, or after some close pinching affliction, wherein we have discovered in ourselves a sweet resignation to, and contentment in the will of God, an heart cleaving to the Lord, purged and made more spiritual under the rod! we can turn to the Lord, and appeal to him, as the

prophet did, Jer. xii. 3. "But thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou "hast seen me, and tried mine heart towards thee."

I say, who can duly value such an advantage: who would exchange such a comfort for all the gold and silver in the world? How many trials soever God brings his people under, to be sure neither his own glory nor their interest shall suffer any damage by them.

SECT. II.

BUT more particularly, let us bring our thoughts close to the matter before us, and we shall find many great advantages and benefits rising out of these trials of sincerity: For,

1. *First*, Hereby hypocrisy is unmasked and discovered; the vizard is plucked off from the false professor, and his true natural face and complexion shewn to the world; and in this there is a great deal of good.

Object. *Good you will say, where lies it? All the world sees the mischief and sad effects of it; many are stumbled, many are hardened by it:* "Woe to the world because of offences!" Matth. xvi. 7.

Sol. True, some are prejudiced and hardened by it, so as never to have good thoughts of the ways and people of God more: That is sad indeed; however, therein God accomplishes his word, and executeth his decree; and though these perish, yet,

First, Others are warned, awakened, and set a searching their own hearts more narrowly than ever, and this is good, 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. Now these were our examples; "wherefore let him that "thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Secondly, Hereby sin is ashamed; and it is good when sin that hath exposed men to so much shame, shall be itself exposed to shame: This is the just reward of sin, Jer. xiii. 25, 26. "This is thy lot, "the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord; because "thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood, therefore will I "discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear."

The turning up the skirt is a modest expression of exposing a person to the greatest shame in the day of trial: God by discovering hypocrisy, shames the hypocrite; and surely, many such discoveries are made of men at this day: We may see sin, that lurked close in the heart before, now laid open before all Israel, and before the sun.

Thirdly, Hereby the poor self-cozening hypocrite hath the greatest opportunity and advantage that ever was before him in all his life, to recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Now all his pretences are gone; now that which like a shield was advanced against the arrows of reproof and conviction is gone; now a poor creature stands naked, and stripped out of all his pleas, as a fair and open mark to the world, and his own conscience; and happy will it be for him, if now the Lord make conviction to enter point blank into his soul. All these are blessed effects of the discovery of hypocrisy.

Secondly, By these trials integrity is cleared up, and the doubts and fears of many upright and holy ones allayed and quieted, resolved and satisfied.

O what would many a poor Christian give for satisfaction in that great point of sincerity! How many tears have been shed to God in secret upon that account? How many hours have been spent in examination of his own heart about it, and still jealousies and fears hang upon his heart? He doubts what he may prove at last. Well, saith God, let his sincerity then come to the test, kindle the fire, and cast in my gold. Trials are the high way to assurance; let my child see that he loves me more than these, that his heart is upright with me. I will try him by prosperity and by adversity, by persecutions and temptations, and he shall see his heart is better than he suspects it to be. This shall be the day of resolution to his fears and doubts.

The apostle speaking of heresies, 1 Cor. xi. 7, 9. puts a necessity upon them: *There must be heresies*, saith he, *that they which are approved may be made manifest.* The same necessity there is (and for the same end) of all other trials of grace, that the lovely, beautiful, sweet face of sincerity may be opened sometimes to the world, to enamour them, and to the soul in whom it is, to satisfy it that it doth not personate a Christian, but lives the very life of a Christian, and hath the very spirit and principles of a Christian in it.

3. *Thirdly*, By these trials, pride and self-confidence are destroyed and mortified in the saints, as much as by any thing in the world. We never see what poor, weak creatures we are, until we come to the trial. It is said, Deut. viii. 2. "God led Israel through the desert, "to prove them, and to humble them." When we are proved, then we are humbled. Those that over-reckon their graces before the trial, see they must come to another account, and take new measures of themselves after they have been upon trial.

Ah! little did I think, saith one, that I had so much love for the world, and so little for God, until afflictions tried it. I could not have believed that ever the creature had got so deep into my heart, until providence either threatened or made a separation, and then I found it. I thought I had been rich in faith, until such a danger befel me, or such a want began to pinch hard; and then I saw how unable I was to trust God for protection, or provision. O it is a good thing that our hearts be kept humble and lowly, how rich soever they be in grace.

4. *Fourthly*, By trials grace is kept in exercise, and the gracious soul preserved from security and spiritual slothfulness. Trials are to grace what the estuations and continual agitations of the waters are to the sea, or what the racking of wines from the lees is to it: Were it not for our frequent trials and exercises, we should quickly settle upon the lees, and our duties would be (as God complains of Ephraim) like sour or dead drink, Hosea iv. 18. flat and spiritless. "Moab

" hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, " and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; neither hath he " gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his " scent is not changed," Jer. xlviii. 11.

Much after that rate it would be with our hearts, did not the Lord frequently try and exercise them. Let the best man be without some trial or other but a few months, and you may find the want of it in his prayers and conferences quickly. O what a tang of formality will be found in them! And is it for the honour of God, or profit of his people, that it should be so? No, the Lord knows it is not; but how shall their spirits be reduced to their former zealous, heavenly temper again? Why, saith the Lord, they must into the furnace again: " I will melt them and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter " of my people," Jer. ix. 7. I love them too well to lose them for want of a rod. Alas! if I should suffer things to go on at this rate, what will become of them in a little time? What delight can I take in their duties, when the faith, fervour, humility, and holy seriousness of their spirits are wanting in them? I will therefore refine them as " silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried, and they shall call " upon my name, and I will hear them, and I will say, It is my people, " and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9. and thus the Lord chides himself friend again with his people.

Thus he recovers them to their true temper, and thus his visitations do preserve their spirits; and when the Lord sees these sweet effects of his trial upon them, it greatly pleaseth him. O now, saith God, I like it; this providence hath done them good; this rod was well bestowed; the letting loose of this temptation, or that corruption upon them, hath made them find their knees again; now I hear the voice of my child again.

Beloved, this is a blessed fruit and effect of our frequent trials: and how ungrateful soever they are to flesh and blood, that affects ease, and is loth to be disturbed, yet it is neceesary to the preservation of our spirits.

5. *Fifthly*, By the trial of our graces Satan is defeated, and his accusations of the saints found to be mere slanders. It is a very common thing with the devil and wicked men, to accuse the people of God of hypocrisy, and to tell the world they are not the men and women they are taken to be; and that if their inside were but turned out by some thorough trial, or deep search, it would appear that religion did not indeed live in their souls, as they pretend, but that they only act a part, and personate heavenly and mortified persons upon the public stage of profession.

Thus the accuser of the brethren suggests the hypocrisy of Job, chap. ii. 5. " Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and " his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face;" q. d. Well might Job serve thee whilst thou hast been so bountiful a master to him; he hath been well rewarded for all the service he hath done thee;

but if thou stop the current of his prosperity, thou shalt see how quickly he will stop the course of his duty; A few lashes from thy hand will make him curse thee to thy face. But O what shame and disappointment was it to that envious spirit? What a vindication of Job's integrity, when under the greatest trials of his faith and patience, he still held fast his integrity, and shewed himself as great a pattern of patience under the cross, as he had been of piety in the days of his greatest prosperity! Satan gets nothing by bringing forth the saints upon the stage, to be made a spectacle to angels and men, as it is, 1 Cor. iv. 9.

6. *Sixthly*, and *lastly*, The frequent trials of grace exhibit a full and living testimony against the atheism of the world. These prove beyond all words or arguments that religion is no fancy, but the greatest reality in the world: Men would make religion but a fancy, and the zeal of its professors, but the intemperate heat of some crazy brains, over-heated with a fond notion.

They that never felt the real influences of religion upon their own souls, will not believe that others do feel them. Serious piety is become the ludicrous subject with which the wanton wits of this atheistical world sport themselves. But behold the wisdom and goodness of God exhibiting to the world the undeniable testimonies of the truth of religion, as often as the sincere professors thereof are brought to the test by afflictions from the hand of God, or persecution from the hands of men: Lo! *here is the faith and patience of the saints;* here is their courage, meekness, and self-denial, shining as gold in the fire; they have the real proofs of it before their eyes; instead of casting them into hell, and convincing them by eternal fire, he is pleased to cast his own people into the fire of affliction, that they who scoff at them may be convinced at an easier and cheaper rate. It is no new thing to see the enemies of religion brought over to embrace it, by the constancy and faithfulness of the saints in their trials and sufferings for it. God grant that the atheism of this present generation do not occasion a more fiery trial to the people of God in it, than they have yet suffered!

CHAP. X.

Shewing that that grace only is to be reckoned sincere and real, which can endure those trials which God appoints, or permits, for the discovery of it.

SECT. I.

BEFORE I offer you the proofs and evidences of this truth, it will be necessary to prevent some mistakes that may be occasioned by misunderstanding it.

Caution 1. And in the first place, we are not to think assurance of

our sincerity impossible to be had in this life, because as long as we live here, we are in a state of trial; and how many trials soever have been made upon us already, yet still there are more to come; and we know not what we shall prove in future trials, though God hath kept us upright in former trials: No, this is none of my meaning; nor doth such a conclusion necessarily follow this assertion: For a Christian that hath rightly closed with Christ at first, and been faithful in the duties of active and passive obedience hitherto, may be assured upon good grounds, of a victory before he come to the fire of his remaining trials. So was the apostle, Rom. viii. 35, &c. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, "or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or "sword? Nay, in all these we are more than conquerors, through "him that hath loved us." Here is an assured triumph before the combat. So Job xxiii. 10. "But he knoweth the way that I take; "when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He appeals to God for the sincerity of his heart so far as he had hitherto gone in the way of religion, and thence concludes, that whatever trials God should bring him to in time to come, he should come forth as gold, i. e. he should not lose one grain by the fire. And this confidence of a gracious soul is built not only upon experience gained in former trials, but upon faith in the power, promises, and faithfulness of God, which are engaged for him in the covenant of grace, to keep him in the greatest dangers that befal him in this world.

He believes the power of God is able to make him stand, though he hath no power nor might in himself to overcome the least temptation, 1 Pet. i. 5. "You are kept, φρουρουμενοι (kept as in a garrison) by "the power of God through faith unto salvation." When Christ hath once taken possession of the soul by his spirit, he fortifies it by his power, as in a garrison: that using the means, it be surprised or betrayed no more into the enemy's hand, so as finally to be lost.

He builds this confidence also upon the promises of God, which are his security in future dangers: And how are all the pages of the Bible bespangled with such promises, as the firmament is with bright and glorious stars? Such are these of the first magnitude, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. "Christ shall confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless "in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye "are called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." And no less satisfying and sweet is that, Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I "will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn "away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their "hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And of the same nature is that also, John x. 27, 28. "My sheep hear my voice, and "I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal "life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck "them out of my hand."

If there be any hypocrite in sheep's-clothing, he hath no part or

lot in this promise; but it secures the whole flock of Christ, great and small, against all danger.

He also builds his assurance upon the faithfulness of God, which stands engaged to make good every line, word, and syllable of his promises to his people, so we find in 1 Cor. x. 13. "There hath no "temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is "faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are "able; but will with every temptation make a way to escape, that "ye may be able to bear it." And, 2 Thes. iii. 3. "But the Lord "is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil."

Add to this the constant prevalent intercession of Christ in heaven for his people, in all their trials: and thus you will see a sincere Christian need not to deny himself the joy and comfort of his assurance, upon the account and supposition of his future trials.

SECT. II.

Caution 2. NOR do we here suppose, in this assertion, that inherent grace in the saints hath a sufficiency of ability in itself to endure the greatest and severest trials that can befal it in this world. It is certain that it shall be carried safely through all, but not in its own strength and ability.

This is a true observation of the learned Gerson, *Perfectiones sibi relictæ, sunt pondera ad ruinam:* The most perfect creature left to itself, will fall into ruin. This was exemplified in the angels that fell; and in Adam, though in a perfect state. Divine preservation is the prop which supports the best creatures from ruin. Grace itself is but a creature, and therefore a dependent being: It is but a stream, depending upon the supply of the fountain: If the fountain let not forth itself, what becomes of the stream? That is a true and judicious observation of the learned Dr. Ames, *Perseverantia fidelium, vel immutabilis eorum conditio secundum integram ejus rationem, non pervenit a principio intrinseco solo, nec a solo extrinseco; sed partim ab intrinseco, ex natura vitæ spiritualis a Christo fluentis, et partim ab extrinseco, ex custodia, protectione et directione Dei; Amesii Coronis*, Art. 5. The perseverance of believers, or the immutability of their condition, if we view the whole ground and reason of it, is not wholly from within, or wholly from without itself; but partly from the nature of the spiritual life which flows from Christ into them, and partly from the keeping, protection, and direction of God: That protection is always afforded to this life of grace; and this life of grace always needs that protection. The best of men are but men at best, as one speaks: It was not Peter's grace and resolution that kept him, but Christ's care of him and intercession for him, Luke xxii. 32. "Be strong in the Lord, (saith the apostle) "and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. "Without me "(saith Christ) ye can do nothing," John xv. 5.

Neither of these is that which I have before me to prove; but

this is that which I aim at, that such seeming grace as was never yet brought to the trial, nor will be able to bear the trial, when God shall bring it thereto, must not pass for current (as too frequently it doth) among us: Such grace will neither comfort us now, nor save us hereafter: For,

SECT. III.

1. FIRST, great numbers of persons in the professing world are deceived and destroyed by trusting to seeming and untried grace: this was the miserable condition of those Laodicean professors in the text; they reckoned themselves rich, but were really poor: All is not gold that glitters; their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole estate lay in some precious stone, suppose a rich diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to see whether it will bear a smart stroke with a hammer, or fly like a Bristol diamond under it? All that you are worth lies in the truth and sincerity of your grace; and till that be tried you know not whether you be worth any thing or nothing.

Reader, There are two sad sights in the world which cannot but deeply affect every upright heart: one is to see so many thousands of rational and ingenuous men in the Romish church, by an implicit faith in their guides, venturing their souls upon their bare word; never searching the scriptures with their own eyes, but wholly trusting to the infallibility of a pope or a council; when, in the mean time, they would fear to take their word for a sum of money, without some further security. It is amazing to behold the soul-destroying, easy credulity of those men; but this is a stroke of madness and spiritual infatuation, judicially inflicted upon them, that the judgment which is written might be fulfilled in them, "God shall send them "strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thes. ii. 11.

And yet more amazing is that stroke of God upon multitudes of vain and formal professors even in the reformed Protestant churches, where no man is restrained from searching the scriptures; nay, where men are so frequently and earnestly pressed, from sabbath to sabbath, to examine themselves, and prove their own work, that yet so many are content to leave all at hazard, and without any more ado, or farther search in the matter, credit the report of their own deceitful hearts, and take all for granted, without due trial or examination of the matter.

Surely, no one thing sends down more souls daily to hell out of the professing world than this doth. The five foolish virgins (i. e. the unprincipled professors in the reformed churches) perished this way; they took it for granted all was well, because they had lamps of profession as well as others; and saw not the cheat till the cry was heard at midnight, and their unfurnished lamps went out, Mat. xxv.

2. *Secondly*, The promises of salvation are made over to tried grace, and such only as will endure the trial: So James i. 12. "Blessed is

" the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall " receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that " love him:" We must be first tried, and then crowned. " If a " man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive " lawfully," 2 Tim. ii. 5. He manifestly alludes to the Roman games, to which there were judges appointed to see that no foul play were offered contrary to the law for wrestling; and where it was found the crown was denied them. Not to him that sets forth in the morning with resolution and gallantry, but to him that holds out till the evening of his life, is the promise made; Matth. x. 22. " He that endureth to the end shall be saved." So Rom. ii. 7. " To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory " and honour, and immortality, eternal life." And once more, Heb. iii. 14. " We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the be- " ginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." So that if you should endure some few slighter troubles, and faint at last, give out when a closer trial befals you, all your labours and sufferings are in vain. Sincerity and final perseverance are the conditions of all special promises.

3. *Thirdly*, Every man's graces and duties must be tried and weighed by God in the great day; and if they cannot endure these lesser trials to which God exposes them now, how will they endure that severe and exact trial to which he will bring them then? No man can search his own heart with that exactness in this world, as God will search it in the world to come.

I may say in this case to you as the Lord spake to Jeremiah, chap. xii. 5. " If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied " thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the " land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they have wearied thee, " then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" This was spoken to encourage the prophet to constancy in his work: and as if the Lord had said, O Jeremy, do the strivings of the men of Anathoth, thine own town, dishearten thee? Pluck up thy spirits, and faint not; there are harder trials than these that thou must undergo at Jerusalem; these are no more to what is coming, than the running with footmen is to the contending with horses, or the passing a small rivulet to the swellings of Jordan.

To allude to this; if our graces and duties cannot bear these lighter trials; if a little lift of prosperity, or lighter stroke of adversity discover so much falseness, rottenness, pride, and selfishness in the heart; if we cannot resist the motions of corruptions, but yield ourselves to obey sin in the lusts of it; if we can neither keep our hearts with God in duties, nor mourn for our wanderings from him; if a few scoffs from wicked tongues, or trials of persecution from the hands of men will cause us to faint in the way, and turn back from following the Lord, what shall we do when " He comes whose fan is in " his hand, and who will thoroughly purge his floor;" Matth. iii.

12. who will try every man's work as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. search the secrets of all hearts, Rom. ii. 16. *weigh every man to his ounces and drachms?* Surely we can take little comfort in that which is so unable to bear the severe tials of that day, that it cannot stand before the slighter trials of this day.

4. *Fourthly*, True grace is willing to be tried, and nothing is more desirable to an upright soul, than to know his own condition: if therefore we shun the trial, and are loth to search ourselves, or be searched by the Lord, our condition is suspicious, and we can take little comfort in it. It was David's earnest desire, Psal. cxxxix. 23. that God would thoroughly search his heart and reins, and see if there were any way of wickedness in him. False grace is shy of God's eye, it cares not to be examined; but this is the delight of sincere ones: "Every one that doth evil hateth the light, lest his "deeds should be reproved; but he that doth truth, cometh to the "light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought "in God," John iii. 20, 21.

The reason is plain why hypocrisy cannot endure to come to the touchstone and test; for hypocrites, having a secret consciousness of their own guilt and unsoundness, know, that by this means their vain confidence would quickly be confuted, and all their reputation for religion blasted. But oh! if men dare not stand before the word, as it is now opened and applied by ministers, how will they stand when it shall be opened and applied in another manner by Jesus Christ?

O professor, if thy condition be good, thy heart right, thou wilt desire to know the very worst of thyself; and when thou hast made the deepest search, thou canst, thou wilt still fear thou hast not been severe enough, and impartial enough to thyself; nothing will give thee more content than when thou feelest the word dividing thy soul and spirit, thy joints and marrrow; nothing so much comforts thee under, or after an affliction, as the discovery it hath made of my heart; thou wilt seem to feel with what affection those words came from the prophet's lips, Jer. xii. 2. "But thou, O Lord, know-"est me, thou hast seen me, and tried my heart towards thee." O what a refreshing sweetness will stream through thy heart, and all the powers of thy soul, when thou canst make the like appeal to God with like sincerity! And certainly, without such a disposition of spirit towards the trial of our graces, we can have little evidence of the truth of them.

CHAP. XI.

Containing divers practical instructive inferences from this doctrine; with a serious exhortation to self-trial and thorough examination.

SECT. I.

Infer. 1. ARE there such variety of trials appointed to examine the sincerity of men's graces; how great a vanity then is hypocrisy,

and to how little purpose do men endeavour to conceal and hide it? We say, Murder will out; and we may as confidently affirm, Hypocrisy will out. When Rebecca had laid the plot to disguise her son Jacob, and by personating his brother, to get the blessing, Jacob thus objects against it, "My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall "seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, "and not a blessing," Gen. xxvii. 12. as if he should say, but what if my father detect the cheat, how then shall I look him in the face? How shall I escape a curse? After the same manner every upright soul scares itself from the way of hypocrisy. If I dissemble, and pretend to be what I am not, my Father will find me out. Ah! there is no darkness nor shadow of death that can conceal the hypocrite, but out will come at last, let him use all the art he can to hide it. Oftentimes God discovers him by the trials he appoints in this world; and men in that day shall "return and discern betwixt the "righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and "him that serveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. But if he make an hard shift to get by a private way to hell, carrying this comfort with him to the last step, that no body knows or thinks he is gone thither; yet there will be a day when God will strip him naked before the great assembly of angels and men, and all shall point at them, and say, *Lo! this is the man that made not God his hope.*

This is he that wore a garment of profession to deceive, but God hath now stript him out of it, and all men see what he is: For, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that "shall not be known," Matth. x. 26. And the apostle assures us, 1 Tim. v. 24, 25. "That they that are otherwise, cannot be hid." If men's works be not good, it is impossible they should be hid long: A gilded piece of brass may pass from hand to hand a little while, but the touchstone will discover the base metal: If that do not, the fire will.

O sinners! away with your hypocrisy, be honest, sincere, plain, and hearty in religion: If not, confusion of face shall be your recompence from the Lord; that is what you shall get by it.

Infer. 2. *Secondly*, Are there such trials appointed and permitted by the Lord for the discovery of his people's sincerity in this world? *Then let none of God's people expect a quiet station in this world;* Certainly you shall meet with no rest here, you must out of one fire into another: and it is a merciful condescension of the Lord to poor creatures, thus to concern himself for their safety and benefit: "What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou "shouldst set thine heart upon him? that thou shouldst visit him "every morning, and try him every moment?" Job vii. 17, 18.

O it is a great deal of honour put upon a poor worm, when God will every moment try him and visit him; it argues the great esteem the goldsmith hath of his gold, when he will sit by the furnace himself, and order the fire with his own hand; when he pries so often

and so curiously into the fining-pot, to see that none of his precious metal, upon which he sets his heart, be lost.

Think it not then debasing to you to be so often exposed to trials. If God did not value you highly, he would not try you so frequently: What would become of you if your condition here should be more settled and quiet than now it is? I believe you find dross enough in your hearts after all the fires into which God hath cast you: Surely there is filth enough in the best of God's people to take all this, it may be a great deal more trouble then they have yet met with. We fancy it a brave life to live at ease; and if we meet with longer respites and intervals of trial than usual, we are apt to say, We shall never be moved, as David did, Psalm xxx. 6. or we shall die in our nest, as it is Job xxix. 18. Our hard and difficult days are over; but woe to us if God should give us the desire of our hearts in this. See what the temper of those men's spirits is, that meet with no changes, Psal. lv. 19. "Because they have no changes, "therefore they fear not God." O it is better to be preserved sweet in brine, than to rot in honey!

Infer. 3. Thirdly, *Let none boast in a carnal confidence of their own strength and stability.* You are in a state of trial, Hitherto God hath kept you upright in all your trials; bless God, but boast not; you are but feathers in the wind of temptation, If God leave you to yourselves. Peter told Christ, (and doubtless he spoke no more than he honestly meant) "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I:" And you know what he did when the hour of his trial came, Matth. xxvi. 35. Angels left to themselves have fallen: It is better to be an humble worm than a proud angel.

Ah! how many Pendletons will this professing age shew, if once God bring us to the fiery trial? "Let him that thinks he stands, "take heed lest he fall." You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. None stand upon firmer ground than those that see nothing in themselves to stand upon; he that leans upon his own arm usually benumbs it, and makes it useless.

Infer. 4. *Fourthly*, Doth God kindle so many fires in Sion, and set his furnaces in Jerusalem, to discover and separate the dross from the gold? How contrary are those men to God that allow, yea, and prize the dross of hypocrisy which God hates, and stick not to make the holy God a patronizer and countenancer of it in the hearts and lives of men?

It is amazing to read what popish pens have impudently written about this matter: * Sylvester puts the question, Whether it be a sin to make a false shew of sanctity? And answers it thus: If it be for the honour of God and profit of others, it is no sin. Nay, they have a reverence for hypocrisy, as an holy art. Vicentius spends a whole chapter in commendation of the hypocrisy of St. Dominio, and

* *A sum adv. simulatio, n.* 4.

entitles it, *De sancta ejus hypocrisi:* i. e. Of the holy hypocrisy of that saint; reckoning it among his commendations, that he had the art of dissembling. And yet, one peg higher, a religious person (saith * another) that feigns himself to have more holiness than he hath, that others may be edified, sins not, but rather merits.

Blush, O heavens! that ever such factors for hell should open and vend such ware as this in the public market, and invite the world to hypocrisy, as that which makes for the glory of God, the edification of men, and a work meritorious in the hypocrite himself: This is the doctrine of devils indeed!

Infer. 5. *Fifthly*, If it be so that all grace must come to the test, and be tried as gold in the fire, even in this world; how are all men concerned to lay a solid foundation at first, and thoroughly deliberate the terms upon which they close with Christ, and engage in the profession of his name? "Which of you, (saith Christ) intending to "build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?" Luke xiv. 28. If some men had sat down at first, and pondered the conditions and terms of Christ, they had not sat down now discouraged, and tired in the way. The apostle Paul went to work at another rate; he accounted all but dung and dross for Christ, Phil. iii. 8. and was of the same mind when the actual trial came; for then he tells us, "He counted not his life dear unto him," Acts xx. 24. And the apostle Peter admonishes believers "not to think it strange "concerning the fiery trial which was to try them," 1 Pet. iv. 12. q. d. Let none of these things be surprisals to you; you are told before-hand what ye must trust to; every Christian must be a martyr, at least in the disposition and resolution of his heart.

O that men would balance the advantages and disadvantages of religion, and thoroughly ponder the matter in their deepest thoughts! To the test you must come; the rain will fall, and the storm beat upon your buildings; look carefully therefore to the foundations.

Infer. 6. *Sixthly*, and *lastly*, Learn from this point the unavoidableness of scandals and offences in the way of religion; for if there be a necessity of trial, there is also a necessity of scandal. "It must needs "be that offences come," Luke xvii. 1. Why must it needs be? The reason is evident; all must come to the trial, and all are not able to bear it. Our Lord tells us, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. of a day of great straits and perplexity coming: "And then (saith he) shall "many be offended." The day of trial is the day of scandal: By these offences some are put a searching themselves, and some fall a censuring all others; but the holy God brings about his end both ways, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

SECT. II.

WELL then, if it be so that all must go into the furnace, let every man try his own work; examine yourselves, professors,

* *Rosella in v. hypocrisis, n.* 1.

search your hearts, commune with your reins, nothing more concerns you in all the world than this doth. O that you would be more in your closets, and oftener upon your knees! O that you would look into the Bible, then into your hearts, and then to God, saying with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; prove me and "try my reins, and see if there be any way of iniquity in me!" Never did religion thrive in the world since men's heads have been so over-heated with notions and controversies, and their hearts so sensibly cooled in their closet-work. I have elsewhere * more largely pressed this duty upon the professors of this generation, and thither shall refer the reader for the present, to see the necessity and importance of this work.

Here I shall only urge the duty of self-trial by some pressing motives and awakening considerations.

Motive 1. And the first shall be the exceeding difficulty of this work: difficulty in some cases may be a discouragement; but where the matter is of absolute necessity, as it is here, nothing provokes more to diligence; "Strive (saith our Lord) to enter in at the strait "gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. A double difficulty is found attending this work of self-trial: Difficulty in bringing the heart to it; and difficulty in the right and successful management of it. Who finds it not hard to persuade his heart to such work as this? Nature declines it, flesh and blood relish it not: It is one of the great severities in religion: It is no easy thing to bring a man and his own heart together.

It is in this case as in the study of Geography; we are more inquisitive to know, and delighted when we discover the rarities of foreign countries, and strange things in the remote parts of the world, than those of our own native country. I fear there be many professors of religion that can spend day after day in hearing, and love to be disputing fruitless controversies, that never spend one day in searching what influence all those sermons they have heard have had upon their hearts, or in rightly stating and determining that great controvery, in whose right and possession their souls are, and which way they shall go as soon as death hath divided them from those mortal bodies; yea, I doubt, many sinful hours are spent in prying into, reporting, and censuring the failings of others, and not one hour faithfully employed in judging their own hearts before the Lord: Oh! men had rather be about any work than this; there is no pleasure in it to the flesh.

And yet how difficult soever it be to bring our hearts to the work, it is certainly much more difficult to manage it successfully, and bring the great question of our sincerity to a clear result and issue. O how many upright hearts have sat close to this work many a year, and lifted up many a cry to heaven, and shed many secret undissembled tears

* See before, my Saint Indeed, &c.

about it; and yet still are in the dark, and their minds greatly perplexed, and filled with fear about it! What would they not do? What would they not suffer? What pleasant enjoyment would they not gladly part with, to arrive at the desire of their souls, the full assurance of their sincerity? It was the saying of a pious woman, I have born, said she, seven children, and they have cost me as dear as ever children cost a mother, yet would I be content to endure all that sorrow over again, to be assured of the love of God to my soul.

Motive 2. Secondly, And as the work is full of difficulty, so the discovery of your sincerity will be full of sweetness and joy unspeakable: It will never repent you that you have prayed and mourned, that you have trembled and feared, that you have searched and tried: Nay, it will never repent you, that God hath tried you by thousands of sharp afflictions and deep sufferings, if, after all, your sincerity may be fully cleared up to the satisfaction of your souls; for in the same day your sincerity shall be cleared, your title to Christ will be made as clear to your souls as your sincerity is; you may then go to the promises boldly, and take your own Christ into the arms of your faith, and say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" Yea, you may be confident, it shall be well with you in the judgment of the great day, for "God will not cast away the upright man," Job viii. 20. If the word clear you now, it cannot condemn you then.

O what an ease it is to the soul, when the fears and doubts that hang about it are gone! When a man sees what he is, and what he hath in Christ and the promises, and what he hath to do; even to spend the time betwixt this and heaven, in admiring the grace of God that hath delivered him from the ruining mistakes and miscarriages by which so great a part of the professing world are lost to all eternity.

Motive 3. Thirdly, The deep concernment of your souls in the matter to be tried, should awaken you to the utmost diligence about it. The trials of men for their life, at human bars, is but a trifle to this: It is our eternal happiness that stands or falls with your sincerity.

It is said in the trial of opinions, that if a man superstruct hay or stubble upon the foundation, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself may be saved, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But if hypocrisy be in the foundation, there is no such relief, there is no possibility of salvation in that case.

Ah, reader, thou must be cast for ever according to the integrity or hypocrisy of thy heart with God. Summon in them all the powers of thy soul: bring thy thoughts as close as it is possible to bring them to this matter: If there be any subject of consideration able to drink up the spirits of a man, here it is: Never was time put to an higher improvement; never were thoughts spent upon a more important business than this is: Happy is the man that rescues the years, months, days, yea, the very moments of his life from other employments to

consecrate them unto this solemn, awful, and most important business!

Motive 4. *Fourthly*, How evidential will it be of your sincerity, when you are willing to come to the trial of your own hearts?

Suppose your doubts and fears should in some degree remain with you; yet in this you may take some comfort, that if hypocrisy be in your heart, it is not there by consent: You are not loth to rise and come to trial, because, like Rachel you sit upon your idols: Certainly it is a good sign thy heart is right when it is filled with so much fear lest it should be false. You know all the disciples said, "Master, "is it I?" before Judas, who was the traitor, spake a word. "Last "of all (saith the text) Judas said, Is it I?" Our willingness to be tried is a good sign that the desire of our soul is to be right with God.

Motive 5. *Fifthly*, Conclude it to be your great advantage to be thoroughly tried, whatever you be found to be in the trial: If you be found sincere, you are richly rewarded for all your pains and labour: Never did that man repent of digging and toiling, that, after all, hit upon the rich vein that he digged for: What is a vein of gold to a vein of sincerity!

If upon search you find the contrary, a false, hypocritical, unsound heart, yet in that very sad discovery you meet with the greatest advantage that ever you had in your lives for salvation. This discovery is your great advantage: For now your vain confidence being overturned, and your ungrounded hopes destroyed; you lie open to the stroke of a deep and effectual conviction of your sin and misery, which is the introductive mercy to all other mercies to your souls; and surely till you come to that, to give up your false hopes, and quit your vain pretensions, there is no hope of you. Christ told the Pharisees, Matth. xxi. 31. Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you: Publicans were the worst sort of men, and harlots the worst sort of women, and yet they stood in a fairer way for heaven than the hypocritical Pharisees, because conviction had easier access to their consciences: They had not those defences and pleas of duty and strictness to ward off the word that the self-cozening Pharisees had.

I may say of your vain and groundless hopes, as Christ, in another sense, said to the officers that came to seize him in the garden, *If you seek me, let these go their way.* So it is here, if you expect Christ and salvation by him, let your vain confidences go their way; away with your masks and vizards, if ever you expect to see Christ. O it is your happiness to have all these things stript off, and your nakedness and poverty discovered, that you may be rich, as the text speaks.

Motive 6. *Sixthly*, Consider how near the day of death and judgment approach you. O these are searching days wherein you cannot be hid: Will your consciences, think you, be put off in a dying day as easily as they are now? No, you know they will not.

I have heard of a good man that consumed not only the greatest part of the day, but a very considerable part of the night also in

prayer, to the great weakening of his body; and being asked by a relation why he did so, and prayed to favour himself, he returned this answer, *O I must die, I must die;* plainly intimating, that so great is the concernment of dying in a clear assured condition, that it is richly worth the expence of all our time and strength to secure it.

You know also that *after death the judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. you are hastening to the judgment of the great and terrible God. Death will put you into his balance to be weighed exactly; and what gives the soul a louder call to search itself with all diligence, whilst it stands at the door of eternity, and its turn is not yet come to go before that awful tribunal: O that these considerations might have place upon our hearts!

CHAP. XII.

Containing divers helps for the clearing of sincerity and discovery of hypocrisy.

SECT. I.

YOU see of what importance the duty of self-examination is, and how many things put a necessity and a solemnity upon that work. Now, in the close of all, I would offer you some helps for the due management thereof, that is as far as I can carry it: the Lord persuade your hearts to the diligent and faithful application and use of them. The general rules to clear sincerity are these that follow:

Rule 1. *We may not presently conclude we are in the state of hypocrisy, because we find some workings of it, and tendencies to it in our spirits:* The best gold hath some dross and alloy in it. Hypocrisy is a weed naturally springing in all ground, the best heart is not perfectly clear or free of it: It may be we are stumbled, when we feel some workings or grudgings of this disease in ourselves, and looking into such scriptures as these, John i. 47. "Behold an "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile:" and Psal. xxxii. 1. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, "and in whose spirit there is no guile."

This I say may stumble some upright soul, not understanding in what an allayed and qualified sense those scriptures are to be understood: For by a *spirit without guile*, is not understood a person absolutely free from all deceitfulness and falseness of heart; this was the sole prerogative of the Lord Jesus, who was separated from sinners, in whose mouth was no guile found: In whom the prince of this world, in all his trials and attempts upon him, found nothing: But we must understand it of reigning and allowed hypocrisy; there is no such guile in any of the saints: distinguish the presence from the predominance of hypocrisy, and the doubt is resolved.

Rule 2. *Every true ground of humiliation for sin is not a sufficient ground for doubting and questioning our estate and condition.* There be many more things to humble us upon the account of our infirmity, than there are to stumble us upon the account of our integrity: It is the sin and affliction of some good souls to call their condition in question upon every slip and failing in the course of their obedience. This is the way to debar ourselves from all the peace and comfort of the Christian life: We find that Joseph was once minded to put away Mary his espoused wife, not knowing that the holy thing which was conceived in her was by the Holy Ghost. It is the sin of hypocrites to take brass for gold, and the folly of saints to call their gold brass: Be as severe to yourselves as you will, provided always you be just: "There is that maketh himself rich, and yet "hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath "great riches," Prov. xiii. 7. Hiram called the cities Solomon gave him, Cabul, Dirty, for they pleased him not, 1 Kings ix. 13. It is but an ill requital, an ungrateful return to God for the best of mercies, to undervalue them in our hearts, and be ready upon all occasions to put them away as worth nothing.

Rule 3. A stronger propension in our nature, and more frequent incidence in our practice to one sin than another, do not presently infer our hypocrisy, and the unsoundness of our hearts in religion. It is true, every hypocrite hath some way of wickedness: Some *peccatum in dilicis*, iniquity that he delights in, and rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue; some lust that he is not willing to part with, nor can endure that the knife of mortification should touch it; and this undoubtedly argues the insincerity and rottenness of his heart: And it is true also that the nature and constitution of the most sanctified man inclines him rather to one sin than to another, though he allow himself in none; yea, though he set himself more watchfully against that sin than another, yet he may still have more trouble and vexation, more temptation and defilement from it than any other.

As every man hath his proper gift, one after this manner, and another after that, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vii. 7. so every man hath his proper sin also, one after this manner and another after that. For it is with original sin as it is with the juice or sap of the earth, which though it be the common matter of all kinds of fruits, yet it is specificated according to the different sorts of plants and seeds which it nourishes; in one it becomes an apple, in another a cherry, &c. Just so it is in original corruption, which is turned into this or that temptation or sin, according to this or that constitution or employment it finds us in; in one it is passion, in another lust, in a third covetousness, in a fourth levity, and so on. Now I say the frequent assaults of this sin, provided we indulge it not, but by setting double guards, labour to keep ourselves from our own iniquity, as David did, Psalm xviii. 23. will not infer the hypocrisy of our hearts.

Rule 4. *A greater backwardness and indisposedness to one duty rather*

than another, doth not conclude the heart to be unsound and false with God, provided we do not inwardly dislike and disapprove any duty of religion, or except against it in our agreement with Christ, but that it riseth merely from the present weakness and distemper we labour under.

There are some duties in religion, as suffering for Christ, bearing sharp reproofs for sin, that even an upright heart under a present distemper, may find a great deal of backwardness and lothness to; yet still he consents to the law, that it is good, is troubled that he cannot comply more cheerfully with his duty, and desires to stand complete in all the will of God: Perfection is his aim, and imperfections are his sorrows.

Some Christians have much ado to bring their hearts to fixed, solemn meditation; their hearts fly off from it, but this is their burden, that it should be so with them. True, it is a very dangerous sign of hypocrisy, when a man's zeal runs out in one channel of obedience only, and he hath not respect to all God's commandments; as physicians observe, the sweating of one part of the body, when all the rest is cold, is symptomatical, and argues an ill habit: But whilst the soul heartily approves all the will of God, and sincerely desires to come up to it, and mourns for its backwardness and deadness to this or that duty, and this is not fixed, but occasional, under some present indisposition out of which the soul riseth by the same degrees as sanctification riseth in him, and the Lord comes in with renewed strength upon him; this, I say, may consist, and is very ordinarily found to be the case of upright-hearted ones.

Rule 5. *The glances of the eye at self-ends in duties, whilst self is not the weight that moves the wheels, the principal end and design we drive at, and whilst those glances are corrected and mourned for, do not conclude the heart to be unsound and hypocritical in religion:* For even among the most deeply sanctified, few can keep their eye so steady and fixed with pure and unmixed respects to the glory of God, but that there will be (alas! too frequently) some by-ends, insinuating and creeping into the heart.

These like the fowls, seize upon the sacrifice, let the soul take what pains it can to drive them away: It is well that our High-priest bears the iniquities of our holy things for us. Peter had too much regard to the pleasing of men, and did not walk with that uprightness towards the Gentile Christians and the believing Jews, in the matter of liberty as became him, Gal. ii. 13, 14. for which, as Paul saith, he ought to be blamed, and he did blame him: But yet such a failing as that in the end of his duty did not condemn him. In public performances there may be too much vanity, in works of charity too much ostentation; these are all workings of hypocrisy in us, and matters of humiliation to us; but whilst they are disallowed, corrected, and mourned over, are consistent with integrity.

Rule 6. *The doubts and fears that hang upon, and perplex our spirits about the hypocrisy of our hearts, do not conclude that therefore we are*

what we fear ourselves to be. God will not condemn every one for a hypocrite that suspects, yea, or charges himself with hypocrisy. Holy David thought his heart was not right with God, after that great slip of his in the matter of Uriah; and therefore begs of God to renew a right spirit in him, Psal. li. 10, 11, 12. his integrity was indeed wounded, and he thought destroyed by that fall.

Holy Mr. Bradford so vehemently doubted the sincerity of his heart, that he subscribed some of his letters, as Mr. Fox tells us, *John Bradford the hypocrite; a very painted sepulchre:* And yet in so saying, he utterly misjudged the state and temper of his own soul.

SECT. II.

WELL then, let not the upright be unjust to themselves in censuring their own hearts; they are bad enough, but let us not make them worse than they are, but thankfully own and acknowledge the least degrees of grace and integrity in them; and possibly our uprightness might be sooner discovered to us, if, in a due composure of spirit, we would sit down and attend the true answers of our own hearts to such questions as these are.

Quest. 1. Do I make the approbation of God, or the applause of men, the very end and main design of my religious performances, according to 1 Thess. ii. 4. Col. iii. 23. will the acceptation of my duties with men satisfy me, whether God accept my duties and person or not?

Quest. 2. Is it the reproach and shame that attends sin at present, and the danger and misery that will follow it hereafter, that restrains me from the commission of it? Or is it the fear of God in my soul, and the hatred I bear to it as it is sin? according to Psal. xix. 12. and Psal. cxix. 113.

Quest. 3. Can I truly and heartily rejoice to see God's work carried on in the world, and his glory promoted by other hands, though I have no share in the credit and honour of it, as Paul did? Phil. i. 18.

Quest. 4. Is there no duty in religion so full of difficulty and self-denial, but I desire to comply with it? And is all the holy and good will of God acceptable to my soul, though I cannot rise up with like readiness to the performance of all duties; according to that pattern? Psal. cxix. 6.

Quest. 5. Am I sincerely resolved to follow Christ and holiness at all seasons, however the aspects of the times be upon religion? Or do I carry myself so warily and covertly as to shun all hazards for religion; having a secret reserve in my heart to launch out no farther than I may return with safety; contrary to the practice and resolution of upright souls? Psalm cxvi. 3. Psal. xliv. 18, 19. Rev. xxii. 11.

Quest. 6. Do I make no conscience of committing secret sins, or neglecting secret duties? Or am I conscientious both in the one and the other, according to the rules and patterns of integrity? Matth. vi. 5, 6. Psal. xix. 12.

A few such questions solemnly propounded to our own hearts, in a calm and serious hour, would sound them, and discover much of their sincerity towards the Lord.

SECT. III.

AND as upright hearts are too apt to apply to themselves the threats and miseries of hypocrites, so hypocrites, on the contrary, are as apt to catch hold of the promises and privileges pertaining to believers.

To detect therefore the soul-damning mistakes of such deceived souls, O that these following rules might be studied, and faithfully applied to their conviction and recovery.

Rule 1. *It is not enough to clear a man from hypocrisy, that he knows not himself to be an hypocrite.* All hypocrites are not designing hypocrites; they deceive themselves as well as others: "Many will say "to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name," &c. Matt. vii. 22. Hell will be a mere surprisal to multitudes of professors: a man may live and die in a blind, ungrounded confidence of his safe condition, and not fear his ruin till he begin to feel it.

Rule 2. *Zeal and forwardness in the cause of God, and for the reformation of his worship, will not clear a man from the danger of hypocrisy.* Jehu was a zealous reformer, and yet but a painted sepulchre. In the year 1549, reformation grew so much in reputation, even among the nobles and gentry in Germany, that many of them caused these five letters, *V. D. M. I. Æ.* being the initial letters of these words, *Verbum Domini manet in æternum:* i. e. *The word of the Lord abideth for ever*, to be wrought, or embroidered, or set in plates, some upon their cloaks, and others upon the sleeves of their garments; to shew to all the world, saith my * author, that forsaking all popish traditions, they would now cleave to the pure doctrine and discipline of the eternal Word.

And no doubt they would have been as good as their word, if what was embroidered on their cloaks, had been engraven on their hearts; but, *Come, see my zeal*, mars all.

Rule 3. *It is no sufficient evidence of a man's own integrity, that he hates hypocrisy in another:* for, as one proud man may hate another, and he that is covetous himself, will be apt to censure another for being so; lusts may be contrary to one another, as well as all of them contrary to grace; so may an hypocrite loath that in another, which yet he alloweth in himself: Nay, it is the policy of some to declaim against the hypocrisy of others, thereby to hide their own. Hypocrites are none of the most modest censurers of others, Psal. xxxv. 16. A salt jest seasoned their meat.

Rule 4. *The mere performance of private duties will not clear a man from hypocrisy.* The influence of education, or support of reputation, or the impulse of a convinced conscience may induce a man to

* *John Wolfe, Lect. Memor. Tom. 2. ad Annum* 1549.

it; and yet all this while his heart may not be carried thither with hungry and thirsty desires after God: it is not the matter of any duty that distinguishes the sound and unsound professors; but the motives, designs, and ends of the soul in them.

Rule 5. *The vogue and opinions you have got among Christians, of your sincerity, will not be sufficient to clear you from the danger of hypocrisy.* Christ tells the angel of Sardis, Rev. iii. 1. "Thou "hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." The fall of Hymeneus and Philetus could never have shaken the faith of the saints as it did, had they not had great credit in the church, and been men of renown for piety among them.

Rule 6. *Your respects and love to them that are the sincere and upright servants of God, will not clear you from the danger of being hypocrites yourselves;* for the bare loving of a Christian is not characteristical and evidential of a man's own Christianity, except he love him, *qua talis*, as he is a Christian, or as he belongs to Christ; and so his sincerity becomes the attractive of thy affection. There are a thousand by-considerations and respects that may kindle a man's love to the saints, besides their integrity.

SECT. IV.

WELL, then, if thou wouldst indeed see the unsoundness of thy own heart, propound such heart-sounding questions as these to thyself.

Quest. 1. Do I engage my heart to approach unto God in the course of my duties? Or do I go in the round of duties, taking no heed to my heart in them? If so, compare this symptom of thy hypocrisy with that in 2 Kings x. 3. and that in Ezek. xxx. 31, 32.

Quest. 2. Am I not swayed and moved by self-interest and carnal respects in the ways of religion, the accommodation of some worldly interest, or getting a name and reputation of godliness? If so, how apparently do the same symptoms of hypocrisy appear upon my soul, which did upon Judas, John xii. 6. and on Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 13, 14.

Quest. 3. Have I not some secret reserves in my heart, notwithstanding that face and appearance of zeal which I put on? Certainly if there be any sin that I cannot part with, any suffering for Christ which I resolve against in my heart; I am none of his disciples, my heart is not right with God, the searcher of hearts himself being Judge, Luke xiv. 26, 27.

Quest. 4. What conscience do I make of secret sins? Do I mourn for a vain heart, wandering thoughts, spiritual deadness? And do I conscientiously abstain from the practice of secret sins, when there is no danger of discovery, no fear of forfeiting my reputation by it? Is it God's eye, or man's, that awes me from the commission of sin? Certainly, if I allow myself in secret sins, I am not of the number of God's upright people, whose spirits are of a contrary temper to mine, Psal. cxix. 113. and Psal. xii. 12.

SECT. V.

I WILL shut up all with five or six concluding counsels, (which the Lord impress upon the heart of him that writes, and those that shall read them) to preserve and antidote the soul against the dangerous insinuation and leaven of hypocrisy.

Counsel 1. *Intreat the Lord night and day, for a renewed and right spirit.* All the helps and directions in the world will not antidote and preserve you from hypocrisy; nothing will be found able to keep you right, till sanctification hath first set you right. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will put my Spirit within you; and cause you to walk "in my statutes."

A bowl may keep by a strait line, so long as the impressed force of the hand that delivered it remains strong upon it; but as that wears off, so its motion fails, and its own basis sways and turns it. A fright of conscience, a pang of warm affection, or the influence of some great example or a good education, may influence an unrenewed soul, and push it on the way of salvation for a season; but the heart so influenced, must, and will return to its own natural course again. And I think there wants nothing but time, or a suitable temptation, to discover the true temper of many a professor's spirit: pray, therefore, as that holy man did, Psal. cxix. 80. "Let my heart be sound "in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."

Counsel 2. *Always suspect and examine your ends in what you do.* Sincerity and hypocrisy lie much in your ends and designs; as they are, so are you. The intentions of the heart lie deep; a man may do the same action to an holy end, and his person and service be accepted with God; which another doing for a corrupt end, it may be reckoned his sin, and both his person and service be abhorred by the Lord. We find two men riding in one chariot, and both of them concerned in the same expedition, Jehu, the son of Nimshi, and Jonadab, the son of Rechab, 2 Kings x. 15, 23. But though the work they engaged in was one, and the same, yet the different ends they aimed at, made the same action an excellent duty in Jonadab, and an act of vile hypocrisy in Jehu: *Idem quod duo faciunt, non est idem:* It was the saying of a good soul, commended for a good action: the work indeed is good, but I fear the ends of it. Self ends are creeping, and insinuating things into the best actions.

Counsel 3. *Scare yourselves with the daily fears of the sin that is in, and the misery that will follow hypocrisy.* Look upon it as the most odious sin in the eyes of God and men; to want holiness is bad enough, but to dissimulate and pretend it, when we have it not, is double impiety: to make religion, the most glorious thing in the world, a mere stirrup to preferment, and a covert to wickedness: O how vile a thing is it! God made Christ a sacrifice for sin, and the hypocrite will make him a cloak for sin.

And as to the punishments that follow it, they are suitable to the nature of the sin: for as hypocrisy is out of measure sinful, so the re-

ward and punishment of it will be out of measure dreadful. Mat. xxiv. 51. "He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion "with hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Counsel 4. *Be daily at work in the mortification of those lusts that breed hypocrisy.* It is plain, without much sifting, that pride, vain-glory, self-love, and a worldly heart, are the seeds out of which this cursed plant springs up in the souls of men. Dig but to the root, you shall certainly find these things there; and till the Lord help you to kill and mortify these, hypocrisy will spring up in all your duties to God, and in all your converses with men.

Counsel 5. *Attend the native voice of your own consciences in the day of sickness, fear or trouble, and take special notice of its checks or upbraidings, which like a stitch in your side, will gird at such times:* Commonly in that lies your greatest danger: Beware of that evil which conscience brands and marks at such times, whether it be your living in the practice of some secret sin, or in the neglect of some known duty: These frights of conscience mark out the corruption, wherein your danger mostly lies.

Counsel. 6. *Let us all that profess religion be uniform and steady in the profession and practice of it, without politic reserves, and by-ends.* O take heed of this Laodicean neutrality and indifferency which Christ hates: Be sure your ground be good, and then be sure you stand your ground. The religion of time-servers is but hypocrisy: They have sluices in their consciences which they can open or shut as occasion requires; Every fox will at least have two holes to his den, that if one be stopt, he may escape at the other. The hypocrite poiseth himself so evenly in a mediocrity, that, as it is said of Baldwin, Let Anthony win, let Augustus win, all is one: So let Christ win, or let Antichrist win, he hopes to make every wind that can blow serviceable to waft him to the port of his own interest.

The hypocrite hath always more of the moon than of the sun; little light, many spots, and frequent changes: It is easier to him to bow to the cross, than to bear the cross; to sin, than to suffer.

Our own story tells us of a poor simple woman that lived both in the reign of queen Mary and queen Elisabeth, and would constantly say her prayers both in Latin and English, that she might be sure to please one side or other; and let God, said she, take which likes him best. What is noted as an act of ridiculous simplicity in her, the time-serving hypocrite accounts a point of deep policy in himself.

The times under Dioclesian were Pagan; under Constantine, Christian; under Constantius, Arian; under Julian, Apostate; and under Jovian, Christian again: And all this within the space of seventy years, the age of one man. O what shifting and shuffling was there among the men of that generation! The changes of weather shew the unsoundness of men's bodies, and the changes of times, the unsoundness of their souls.

Christian, if ever thou wilt manifest and maintain thine integrity,

be a man but of one design, and be sure that be an honest and good design, to secure heaven, whatever becomes of earth: To hold fast integrity, whatever thou art forced to let go for its sake.

Take heed of pious frauds: Certainly it was the devil that first married these two words together, for they never did, nor can agree betwixt themselves, nor was ever such a marriage made in heaven.

Never study to model religion, and the exercises thereof, in a consistency with, or subserviency to your fleshly interests: If your religion be but a mock religion, your reward shall be but a mock heaven, that is a real hell.

O the vanity and inutility of these projects and designs! Men strive to cast themselves into such modes, and stint themselves to such measures of religion, as they think will best promote, or secure their earthly interests: but it often falls out, contrary to their expectation, that their deep policies are ridiculous follies; they become the grief and shame of their friends, and the scorn and song of their enemies. And often it fares with them, as with him that placed himself in the middle of the table, where he could neither reach the dish above him, nor that below him, *Esuriunt medii, &c.* and, which is the very best of it, if earthly interest be accommodated by sinful neutrality, and a Laodicean indifferency in religion, yet no good man should once feel a temptation to embrace it, except he think what is wanting in the sweetness of his sleep, may be fully recompensed to him by the stateliness of his bed, and richer furniture of his chamber; I mean that a fuller and higher condition in the world, can make him amends for the loss of his inward peace, and the quiet repose of a good conscience: These by-ends and self-interests are the little passages through which hypocrisy creeps in upon the professors of religion.

O let this be your rejoicing, which was Paul's, "The testimony "of your conscience, that in all sincerity and godly simplicity, not "in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, you have had your "conversation in this world," 2 Cor. i. 12.

Let that be your daily prayer and cry to heaven, which was David's, Psal. xxv. 21. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve "me, for I wait on thee."

Counsel 7. *Keep your hearts day and night under the awe of God's all-seeing eye:* Remember he beholds all your ways, and ponders all your thoughts; how covertly soever hypocrisy may be carried for a time, all must and will out at last, Luke xii. 3. Secresy is the main inducement to hypocrisy, but it will fall out with the hypocrite, as it did with Ottocar the king of Bohemia, who refused to do homage to Rodolphus the emperor, till at last chastised with war, he was content to do him homage privately in a tent: But the tent was so contrived by the emperor's servants, that by drawing one cord, it was taken all away; and so Ottocar was presented on his knees doing homage in view of three armies.

Reader, Awe thy heart with God's eye, know that he will bring

every secret thing into judgment. Thus did Job, and it preserved him, Job xxxi. 1, 4. Thus did David, and it preserved him, Psal. xviii. 21, 22, 23. Thus do thou also, and it will preserve thee blameless and without guile to the day of Christ.

A

TOKEN FOR MOURNERS:

OR THE

ADVICE OF CHRIST TO A DISTRESSED MOTHER,

BEWAILING THE DEATH OF HER DEAR AND ONLY SON:

Wherein the Boundaries of Sorrow are duly fixed, Excesses restrained, the common Pleas answered, and divers Rules for the support of God's afflicted Ones prescribed.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To his dearly beloved brother and sister, Mr. J. C. and Mrs. E. C. the Author wisheth grace, mercy, and peace

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE double tye of nature and grace, beside the many endearing passages that for so many years have linked and glewed our affections so intimately, cannot but beget a tender sympathy in me with you under all your troubles, and make me say of every affliction which befals you, Half's mine. I find it is with our affections as with the strings of musical instruments exactly set at the same height, if one be touched, the other trembles, though it be at some distance.

Our affections are one, and so in a great measure have been our afflictions also. You cannot forget that in the years lately past, the Almighty visited my tabernacle with the rod, and in one year cut off from it the root, and the branch, the tender mother, and the only son. What the effects of those strokes, or rather of my own unmortified passions were, I have felt, and you and others have heard. Surely I was as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Yea, I may say with them, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remembering mine affliction and "my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still "in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

I dare not say that ever I felt my heart discontentedly rising and swelling against God; no, I could still justify him, when I most sensibly smarted by his hand: If he had plunged me into a sea of sorrow, yet I could say in all that sea of sorrow, there is not a drop of injustice: But it was the over-heating and over-acting of my fond and unmortified affections and passions that made so sad impressions upon my body, and cast me under those distempers which soon embittered all my remaining comforts to me.

It was my earnest desire, so soon as I had strength and opportunity for so great a journey to visit you, that so, if the Lord had pleased, I might both refresh and be refreshed by you, after all my sad and disconsolate days. And you cannot imagine what content and pleasure I projected in that visit; but it proved to us, as all other comforts of the same kind ordinarily do, more in expectation than in fruition: For how soon after our joyful meeting and embraces did the Lord overcast and darken our day, by sending death into your tabernacle, to take away the desire of your eyes with a stroke! to crop off that sweet and only bud from which we promised ourselves so much comfort. But no more of that, I fear I am gone too far already. It is not my design to exasperate your troubles, but to heal them; and for that purpose have I sent you these papers, which I hope may be of use both to you and many others in your condition, since they are the after-fruits of my own troubles; things that I have not commended to you from another hand, but which I have, in some measure, proved and tasted in my own trials.

But I will not hold you longer here; I have only a few things to desire for, and from you, and I have done.

The things I desire are,

First, That you will not be too hasty to get off the yoke which God hath put upon your neck. Remember when your child was in the womb, neither of you desired it should be delivered thence till God's appointed time was fully come; and now that you travail again with sorrow for its death: O desire not to be delivered from your sorrows one moment before God's time for your deliverance be fully come also. Let patience have its perfect work; that comfort which comes in God's way and season, will stick by you, and do you good indeed.

Secondly, I desire, that though you and your afflictions had a sad meeting, yet you and they may have a comfortable parting. If they effect that upon your hearts which God sent them for, I doubt not but you will give them a fair testimony when they go off.

If they obtain God's blessing upon them in their operation, surely they will have your blessing too at their valediction. And what you entertained with fear, you will dismiss with praise. How sweet is it to hear the afflicted soul say, when God is loosing his hands, "It is "good for me that I have been afflicted."

Thirdly, I heartily wish that these searching afflictions may make the more satisfying discoveries; that you may now see more of the

evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, and the fulness of Christ, than ever you yet saw. Afflictions are searchers, and put the soul upon searching and trying its ways, Lam. iii. 14. When our sin finds us out by affliction, happy are we, if, by the light of affliction we find out sin. Blessed is the man whom God chasteneth, and teacheth out of his law, Psal. xciv. 12. There are unseen causes, many times, of our troubles; you have an advantage now to sift out the seeds and principles from which they spring.

Fourthly, I wish that all the love and delight you bestowed on your little one, may now be placed, to your greater advantage, upon Jesus Christ; and that the stream of your affection to him may be so much the stronger, as there are now fewer channels for it to be divided into. If God will not have any part of your happiness to lie in children, then let it wholly lie in himself. If the jealousy of the Lord hath removed that which drew away too much of your heart from him, and hath spoken by this rod, saying, Stand aside, child, thou art in my way, and fillest more room in thy parent's hearts than belongs to thee: O then deliver up all to him, and say, Lord, take the whole heart entirely, and undividedly to thyself. Henceforth let there be no parting, sharing, or dividing of the affections betwixt God and the creature, let all the streams meet, and centre in thee only.

Fifthly, That you may be strengthened with all might in the inner man to all patience, that the peace of God may keep your hearts and minds, labour to bring your hearts to a meek submission to the rod of your Father. We had fathers of the flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? Is it comely for children to contest and strive with their father? Or is it the way to be freed from the yoke by struggling under it? O that your hearts might be in a like frame with his that said, Lord, thou shalt beat, and I will bear. It was a good observation that one made, *Anima sedendo et quiescendo fit sapiens;* The soul grows wise by sitting still and quiet under the rod. And the apostle calls those excellent fruits which the saints gather from their sanctified afflictions, *The peaceable fruits of righteousness*, Heb. xii. 11.

Lastly, My heart's desire and prayer to God for you, is, that you may die daily to all visible emjoyments, and by these frequent converses with death in your family, you may be prepared for your own change and dissolution, when it shall come.

O friends! how many graves have you and I seen opened for our dear relations? How oft hath death come up into your windows, and summoned the delight of your eyes? It is but a little while, and we shall go to them; we and they are distinguished but by short intervals.

Transivere patres, simul hinc transibimus omnes.

Our dear parents are gone, our lovely and desirable children are

gone, our bosom relations, that were as our own souls, are gone; and do not all these warning-knocks at our doors acquaint us, that we must prepare to follow shortly after them?

O that by these things our own death might be both more easy and familiar to us; the oftener it visits us, the better we should be acquainted with it; and the more of our beloved relations it removes before us, the less of either snare or intanglement remains for us when our turn comes.

My dear friends, my flesh and my blood, I beseech you, for religion's sake, for your own sake, and for my sake, whose comfort is in great part bound up in your prosperity and welfare, that you read frequently, ponder seriously, and apply believingly these scripture consolations and directions, which, in some haste, I have gathered for your use; and the God of all consolation be with you.

I am,

Your most endeared Brother,

JOHN FLAVEL.

A

TOKEN FOR MOURNERS.

LUKE vii. 13.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not.

TO be above the stroke of passion, is a condition equal to angels: to be in a state of sorrow without the sense of sorrow, is a disposition beneath beasts: but duly to regulate our sorrows, and bound our passions under the rod, is the wisdom, duty, and excellency of a Christian. He that is without natural affections, is deservedly ranked amongst the worst of heathens; and he that is able rightly to manage them, deserves to be numbered with the best of Christians. Though when we are sanctified we put on the Divine nature, yet, till we are glorified, we put not off the infirmities of our human nature.

Whilst we are within the reach of troubles, we cannot be without the danger, nor ought not to be without the fear of sin; and it is as hard for us to escape sin, being in adversity, as becalming in prosperity.

How apt are we to transgress the bounds, both of reason and religion, under a sharp affliction, appears, as in most men's experience, so

in this woman's example, to whose excessive sorrow Christ puts a stop in the text: "He saw her, and had compassion on her, and "said to her, "Weep not."

The lamentations and wailings of this distressed mother, moved the tender compassions of the Lord in beholding them, and stirred up more pity in his heart for her, than could be in her heart for her dear and only son.

In the words we are to consider both the condition of the woman, and the counsel of Christ with respect unto it.

First, The condition of this woman, which appears to be very dolorous and distressed; her groans and tears moved and melted the very heart of Christ to hear and behold them: "When he saw "her, he had compassion on her."

How sad an hour it was with her, when Christ met her, appears by what is so distinctly remarked by the evangelist, ver. 12. where it is said, "Now when they came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, "there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and "she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her."

In this one verse, divers heart-piercing circumstances of this affliction are noted.

First, It was the *death of a son* *. To bury a child, any child, must needs rend the heart of a tender parent; for what are children but the parent multiplied? A child is a part of the parent made up in another skin: But to lay a son in the grave, a son who continues the name, and supports the family; this was ever accounted a very great affliction.

Secondly, This son was not carried from the cradle to the coffin, nor stripped out of its swathing, to be wrapped in its winding-cloth. Had he died in his infancy, before he had engaged affection, or raised expectation, the affliction had not been so pungent, and cutting as now it was: death smote the son in the flower and prime of his time. He was a *man*, (saith the evangelist) ver. 12. *a young man*, (as Christ calls him) ver. 14. he was now arrived at that age which made him capable of yielding his mother all that comfort which had been the expectation and hope of many years, and the reward and fruit of many cares and labours: yet then, when the endearments were greatest, and her hopes highest, even in the flower of his age he is cut off.

Thus Basil bewailed the death of his son: ‡ 'I once had a son,

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* φιλιας μεγιστος δεσμος ειναι τεκνων γονας, i. e. To be parents to children is the firmest tie of affection. *Græc. Com.*

† He died in his youth, and was therefore the more to be lamented, because he was cut off in the flower of his age, unto which he was conducted from a child, by the great care and labour of his parents. *Dion. Cat. on the place.*

‡ *Filius mihi erat, adolescens, solus vitæ successor, solatium senectutis, gloria generis, flos æqualium, fulerum domus, ætatem gratiosissimam agebat; hic raptus periit, qui paulo ante jucundam vocem edebat, et jucundissimum spectaculum parentis oculis erat.*

'who was a young man, my only successor, the solace of my age, 'the glory of his kind, the prop of my family, arrived to the endear-'ing age; then was he snatched away from me by death, whose lovely 'voice but a little before I heard, who lately was a pleasant spec-'tacle to his parent.'

Reader, if this hath been thine own condition, as it hath been his that writes it, I need say no more to convince thee that it was a sorrowful state indeed, Christ met this tender mother in.

Thirdly, And which is yet more, he was not only a son, but an only son: so you find, in ver. 12. "He was the only son of his "mother;" * one in whom all her hopes and comforts, of that kind, were bound up. For, *Omnis in Ascanio, stat chari cura parentis*, Virgil. All her affections were contracted into this one object. If we have never so many children, we know not which of them to spare; if they stand like olive plants about our tables, it would grieve us to see the least twig amongst them broken down. But surely the death of one out of many is much more tolerable than all in one †.

Hence it is noted in scripture as the greatest of earthly sorrows, Jer. vi. 26. "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, "and wallow thyself in ashes. Make thee mourning as for an only "son, most bitter lamentation." Yea, so deep and penetrating is this grief, that the Holy Ghost borrows it to express the deepest spiritual troubles by it, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall mourn for him, (namely "Christ,) whom they have pierced as one mourneth for an only son."

Fourthly, And yet, to heighten the affliction, it is superadded, ver. 12. "And she was a widow." So that the staff of her age, on which she leaned, was broken: ‡ she had now none left to comfort or assist her, in her helpless, comfortless state of widowhood; which is a condition not only void of comfort, but exposed to oppression, and contempt.

Yea, and being a widow, the whole burthen lay upon her alone; she had not an husband to comfort her, as Elkanah did Hannah, in 1 Sam. i. 8. "Why weepest thou, and why is thy heart grieved? "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" This would have been a great relief; but her husband was dead, as well as her son, both gone, and she only surviving, to lament the loss of those comforts that once she had. Her calamities came not single, but one after another, and this reviving, and aggravating the former. This was her case, and condition, when the Lord met her.

Secondly, Let us consider the counsel which Christ gave her, with

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* She would have borne his death more patiently, had he not been an only son; or if she had had but another left behind him, to mitigate her sorrow. *Ambrose.*

† As if there is nothing dearer than an only son, so that grief upon the account of his death, must be the greatest af all. *Carth. on the place.*

‡ He was most dear to her on a twofold account, both because he was her only son, and that he was the comfort and support of her widowhood. *Piscator on the place.*

respect to this, her sad, and sorrowful case: "And when the Lord "saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep "not." Relieving and supporting words; wherein we shall consider,

1. The occasion.
2. The motive.
3. The counsel itself.

1. The occasion of it, and that was his seeing of her. This meeting at the gate of the city, how accidental, and occasional soever it seems, yet without doubt, it was providentially suited to the work intended to be wrought: The eye of his omniscience foresaw her, and this meetiug was by him designed as an occasion of that famous miracle which he wrought upon the young man. Christ hath a quick eye to discern poor, mourning, and disconsolate creatures: And though he be now in heaven, and stands out of our sight, so that we see him not; yet he sees us, and his eye (which is upon all our troubles) still affects his heart, and moves his bowels for us.

2. The motive stirring him up to give this relieving, and comfortable counsel to her, was his own compassion: She neither expected, nor desired it from him; but so full of tender pity was the Lord towards her, that he prevents her with unexpected consolation: Her heart was nothing so full of compassion for her son, as Christ was for her; he bore our infirmities, even natural, as well as moral ones, in the days of his flesh; and though he be now exalted to the highest glory, yet still he continues as merciful as ever, and as apt to be touched with the sense of our miseries, Heb. iv. 15.

Lastly, The counsel itself, *Weep not;* herein fulfilling the office of a comforter to them that mourn, whereunto he was anointed, Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. Yet the words are not an absolute prohibition of tears, and sorrow; he doth not condemn all mourning as sinful, or all expressions of grief for dead relations as uncomely; no, Christ would not have his people stupid, and insensate; he only prohibits the excesses, and extravagancies of our sorrows for the dead, that it should not be such a mourning for the dead as is found among the *heathen*, who sorrow without measure, because without hope, being ignorant of that grand relief, which the gospel reveals.

The resurrection of her son from the dead, is the ground upon which Christ builds her consolation, and relief; well might he say, *Weep not*, when he intended quickly to remove the cause of her tears, by restoring him again to life.

Now, though there be somewhat in this case extraordinary, and peculiar, for few or none that carry their dead children to the grave, may expect to receive them again from the dead immediately, by a special resurrection, as she did; I say, this is not to be expected by any that now lose their relations; the occasion and reason of such miraculous, special resurrections, being removed, by a sufficient and full evidence, and confirmation of Christ's divine power and Godhead;

yet those that now bury their relations, if they be such as die in Christ, have as good and sufficient reason to moderate their passions, as this mourner had, and do as truly come within the reach and compass of this Christ's comfortable, and supporting counsel, *Weep not*, as she did: For do but consider, what of support or comfort can a particular and present resurrection from the dead give us, more than that it is, and as it is, a specimen, handsel, or pledge of the general resurrection? It is not the returning of the soul to its body, to live an animal life again, in this world of sin and sorrow, and shortly after to undergo the agonies, and pains of death again, that is in itself any such privilege as may afford much comfort to the person raised, or his relations: It is no privilege to the person raised, for it returns him from rest to trouble, from the harbour back again into the ocean. It is matter of trouble to many dying saints, to hear of the likelihood of their returning again, when they are got so nigh to heaven.

It was once the case of a godly minister of this nation, who was much troubled at his return, and said, I am like a sheep driven out of the storm almost to the fold, and then driven back into the storm again; or a weary traveller that is come near his home, and then must go back to fetch somewhat he had forgotten; or an apprentice, whose time is almost expired, and then must begin a new term.

But to die, and then return again from the dead, hath less of privilege, than to return only from the brink of the grave; for the sick hath not yet felt the agonies and last struggles, or pangs of death; but such have felt them once, and must feel them again, they must die twice, before they can be happy once; and, besides, during the little time they spend on earth betwixt the first and second dissolution, there is a perfect *αμνησια*, forgetfulness, and insensibleness, of all that which they saw, or enjoyed, in their estate of separation: It being necessary both for them and others, that it should be so. For themselves it is necessary, that they may be content to live, and endure the time of separation from that blessed and ineffable state, quietly and patiently;* and for others, that they may live by faith, and not by sense; and build upon divine, and not human authority and report.

So that here you see, their agonies and pangs are doubled, and yet their lives not sweetened by any sense of their happiness, which returns and remains with them; and therefore it can be no such privilege to them.

And for their relations: Though it be some comfort to receive them again from the dead; yet the consideration that they are returned to them into the stormy sea, to partake of new sorrows and troubles, from which they were lately free: And in a short time they must

* *Victurosque dii celant, ut vivere durent.*
How long or short men live is kept a mystery,
To make us both live well and less afraid to die.

part with them again, and feel the double sorrows of a parting pull, which others feel but once; surely such a particular resurrection, considered in itself, is no such ground of comfort as at first we might imagine it to be.

It remains, then, that the ground of all solid comfort and relief, against the death of our relations, lies in the general and last resurrection, and what is in a particular one, is but, as it were, a specimen* and evidence of the general: and there the apostle places our relief, 1 Thes. iv. 17. that we shall see and enjoy them again, at the Lord's coming. And surely this is more than if (with this mother in the text) we should presently receive them from the dead, as she did her son: And if we judge not so, it is because our hearts are carnal, and measure things rather by time and sense, than by faith and eternity.

Thus you see the counsel, with its ground, which, for the most part, is common to other Christian mourners with her; the difference being but inconsiderable, and of little advantage.

Here, then, you find many aggravations of sorrow meeting together; a son, an only son, is carrying to the grave; yet Christ commands the pensive mother not to mourn.

Hence we note,

Doct. *That Christians ought to moderate their sorrows for their dead relations, how many afflicting circumstances, and aggravations soever meet together in their death.*

It is as common with men, yea, with good men, to exceed in their sorrows for dead relations†, as it is to exceed in their love and delights to living relations; and both of the one, and the other, we may say, as they say of waters, It is hard to confine them within their bounds. It is therefore grave advice which the apostle delivers in this case, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. "But this I say, brethren, the "time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as "though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept "not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." As if he had said, the floating world is near its port;‡ God hath contracted the sails of man's life; it is but a point of time we have to live, and shortly it will not be a point to choose whether we had wives or not, children or not. All these are time-eaten things, and before the expected fruit of these comforts be ripe, we ourselves may be rotten. It is therefore an high point of wisdom to look upon things which shortly will not be, as if already they were not, and to behave ourselves in the loss of these carnal enjoyments, as the natural man behaves himself in the use of spiritual ordinances; he hears as if he heard not, and we should weep as if we wept not; their affections are a little moved, sometimes by spiritual things, but they never lay

* Therein we have a noble specimen of the future resurrection. *Calvin on the place.*

† Whatever we love ardently while we have it, we lament bitterly when we lose it. *Greg. mor.*

‡ Καιρος συνεσταλμενος, i. e. the time is contracted.

them so to heart, as to be broken-hearted for the sin they hear of, or deeply affected with the glory revealed. We also ought to be sensible of the stroke of God upon our dear relations; but yet still we must weep, as if we wept not; that is, we must keep due bounds, and moderation in our sorrows, and not to be too deeply concerned for these dying, short-lived things.

To this purpose the apostle exhorts, Heb. xii. 5. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou "art rebuked of him." These are two extremes, despising and fainting: when God is correcting, to say, I do not regard it, let God take all, if he will; if my estate must go, let it go; if my children die, let them die: this is to despise the Lord's chastening; and God cannot bear it, that we should bear it thus lightly.

There is also another extreme, and that is fainting: if, when goods are taken away the heart be taken away, and when children die, then the spirit of the parent dies also; this is fainting under the rod. Thou lamentest, saith Senaca, thy deceased friend; but I would not have thee grieve beyond what is meet: that thou shouldest not grieve at all, I dare not require thee; tears may be excused, if they do not exceed. Let thine eyes, therefore, be neither wholly dry, nor let them overflow: weep thou mayest, but wail thou must not.

Happy man, that still keeps the golden bridle of moderation upon his passions, and affections, and still keeps the possession of himself, whatsoever he lose the possession of.

Now the method in which I propose to proceed, shall be,

1. To discover the signs,
2. To dissuade from the sin,
3. To remove the pleas,
4. To propose the cure of immoderate sorrow.

First, I shall give you the signs of immoderate sorrow, and shew you when it exceeds its bounds, and becomes sinful, even a sorrow to be sorrowed for; and, for clearness sake, I will first allow what may be allowed to the Christian mourner, and then you will the better discern wherein the excess and sinfulness of your sorrow lies.

And, *First*, How much soever we censure, and condemn immoderate sorrow; *yet the afflicted must be allowed an awakened, and tender sense of the Lord's afflicting hand upon them.* It is no virtue to bear what we do not feel; yea, it is a most unbecoming temper, not to tremble when God is smiting.

The Lord saith to Moses, in the case of Miriam, Numb. xii. 24. "If her father had spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven "days?" The face is the table, and seat of beauty and honour; but when it is spit upon, it is made the sink of shame. Had her own father spit upon her face when she had displeased him, would she not have gone aside, as one ashamed by such a rebuke, and not have shewed her face to him again in seven days? How much more should she take it to heart, and be sensible of this rebuke of mine, who have

filled her face with leprous spots, the signs of my displeasure against her? Surely God will be ashamed of those that are not ashamed when he rebukes them.

It is not magnanimity, but stupidity, to make light of God's corrections; and for this the afflicted are smartly taxed, Jer. v. 3. "I "have smitten them, but they have not grieved." When God smote Job in his person, children, and estate, he arose and rent his mantle, and put dust upon his head, to shew he was not senseless and unaffected, and yet blessed the afflicting God; which, as plainly shewed he was not contumacious and unsubmissive.

Secondly, *We must allow the mourning, afflicted soul, a due and comely expression of his grief and sorrow in his complaints both to God and men.*

It is much more becoming a Christian, ingeniously to open his troubles, than suddenly to smother them. There is no sin in complaining to God, but much wickedness in complaining of him. Griefs are eased by groans and heart-pressures relieved by utterance. This was David's course and constant way, who was a man of afflictions, Psalm cxlii. 2, 3. "I poured out my complaint before him, I "shewed before him my trouble; when my spirit was overwhelmed "within me, then thou knowest my path."

To whom should children go, but to their father, to make their moan? Whence may they expect relief and comfort but from him? The 102d Psalm is intituled, "A Psalm for the afflicted, when he is "overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord."

And happy were it if every afflicted soul would choose this way to express his sorrows. Did we complain more to God, he would complain less of us, and quickly abate the matters of our complaint. O you cannot think how moving, how melting, how prevailing it is with God, when his poor, burdened, and afflicted people in a day of distress and despondency, when deep calleth unto deep, and one wave drives on another, then for the oppressed soul, with humility, filial confidence, and faith, to turn itself to the Lord, and thus bespeak him.

'Father, what shall I do? My soul is greatly bowed down by 'trouble; I am full to the brim, my vain heart hath looked for 'relief this way and that way, but none comes; every door of com-'fort is shut up against me: Thou hast multiplied my sorrows, and 'renewed my witnesses against me: Comfort is removed from my 'outward, and peace from my inner man; sharp afflictions without, 'and bitter reflections within. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake 'for me. Fathers of the flesh pity their distressed children, when 'they complain to them; and wilt not thou, O Lord, whose com-'passions as far exceed creature-compassions as the sea exceeds a 'drop; O my Father! pity me, support me, deliver me."

O how acceptable is this to God! how advantageous to the soul!

We may also make our complaint to men. So did Job, chap. xix. ver. 21. "Have pity, have pity on me, O ye my friends, for the hand

" of God hath touched me." And it is a mercy if we have any friends that are wise, faithful, and experienced; they are born for such a time as this, Prov. xvii. 17. but be they what they will, they cannot pity as God, relieve and succour as he; and oftentimes we may say with Job, chap. xxi. ver. 4. " As for me, is my complaint to men? " And if it were, why should not my spirit be troubled?" q. d. What great advantage can I get by these complaints? I may burden the heart of my friend, but how little doth that ease my own? Yet the very opening of the heart to an experienced, tender Christian, is some relief, and the engaging his prayers is more. Thus far you moan safely, in all this there is no danger.

Thirdly, *The afflicted person may (ordinarily) accuse, judge, and condemn himself, for being the cause and procurer of his own troubles.* He may lawfully be discontented and vexed with himself for his own folly, when the iniquity of his heels compasseth him about. And truly it is but seldom that any great affliction befals a gracious person, but he saw the need of such a rod before he felt it.

Hath God smitten thy child, or friend, and didst thou not foresee some sharp trial coming? Did not thy fond, secure, carnal temper, need such a scourge to awaken, quicken, and purge thee? Or, if you did not foresee it, it is now your duty to search and examine yourselves. So the church, in her affliction, resolved, Lam. iii. 40. " Let " us search and try our ways." When God is smiting, we should be a searching: Surely our iniquities will enquire after us if we will not enquire after them: Yea, in the day of affliction, a gracious soul is inquisitive about nothing more than the procuring and provoking cause of his troubles, Job x. 2. " Shew me wherefore thou contend- " est with me;" q. d. Lord, what special corruption is it that this rod is sent to rebuke? What sinful neglect doth it come to humble me for? O discover it now to me, and recover me now from it.

And having found the root and cause of their troubles, ingenuous souls will shame themselves for it, and give glory to God by an humble submission and vindication of the equity of his proceedings, Job vii. 20. " I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, thou preserver " of men?" He thinks it no shame freely to discover unto God, and deeply to abase himself before him for his folly.

I remember a choice note that * Mr. Brightman hath in his commentary upon the Canticles.

' Holy men, saith he, after their hearts are renewed by repent- ' ance, are not ashamed to remember and confess their slips, and ' shameful falls to the glory of God; for they account that the glory ' which such confessions take from them, is not lost, whilst it goes ' to the glory of God.' If his glory may rise out of our shame,

* *Nec enim pudet sanctos viros, postquam renovati corde fuerint, per resipiscentiam lapsus sui & dedecoris ad Dei gloriam meminisse. Nihil nobis decedit, quod cedit in illius honorem.* Brightman in Cant. c. 1. v. 4. p. 11.

how willing should we be to take such shame to us? Holy David was not ashamed to acknowledge, Psal. xxxviii. 5. "My wounds stink, "and are corrupted, because of my foolishness." He is the wisest man that thus befools himself before God.

It is true, God may afflict from prerogative, or for trial; but we may always see cause enough in ourselves, and it is safest to charge it upon our own folly.

Lastly, *The afflicted Christian may, in an humble, submissive manner, plead with God, and be earnest for the removal of the affliction.*

When affliction presseth us above strength, when it disables us for duty, or when it gives advantage to temptation; then we may say with David, "Remove thy stroke from me, I am consumed by the "blow of thine hand," Psal. xxxix. 10. Even our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of his troubles, poured out his soul with strong cries and many tears, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, let this cup pass "from me," Luke xxii. 42. Oppressed nature desires ease, and even our renewed nature desires freedom from those clogs and temptations, which hinder us in duty, or expose us to snares.

Thus far we may safely go.

But sorrow then becomes sinful and excessive, when,

First, *It causeth us to slight and despise all our other mercies, and enjoyments as small things, in comparison of what we have lost.*

It often falls out, that the setting of one comfort, clouds and benights all the rest. Our tears for our lost enjoyments so blind our eyes, that we cannot see the many other mercies which yet remain: We take so much notice of what is gone, that we take little or no notice of what is left. But this is very sinful, for it involves in it both ignorance, ingratitude, and great provocation.

It is a sin springing from ignorance. Did we know the desert of our sins, we should rather wonder to see one mercy left, than that twenty are cut off. They that know they have forfeited every mercy, should be thankful that they enjoy any, and patient when they lose any of their comforts.

Did we know God, even that sovereign Lord at whose dispose our comforts come and go, who can the next moment blast all that remain, and turn you into hell afterwards, you would prize the mercies he yet indulges to you, at an higher value. Did you understand the fickle, vanishing nature of the creature, what a flower, what a bubble it is; O how thankful would you be to find so many yet left in your possession!

Did you know the case of thousands, as good, yea, better than you, whose whole harvest of comfort in this world is but a handful to the gleanings of the comforts you still enjoy, who in all their lives never were owners of such comfortable enjoyments as you now overlook; surely you would not act as you do.

Besides, what vile ingratitude is in this? What, are all your remaining mercies worth nothing? You have buried a child, a friend;

well, but still you have a husband, a wife, other children; or if not, you have comfortable accommodations for yourselves, with health to enjoy them; or if not, yet have you the ordinances of God, it may be, an interest in Christ and in the covenant, pardon of sin, and hopes of glory. What, and yet sink at this rate, as if all your mercies, comforts, and hopes, even in both worlds, were buried in one grave. Must Ichabod be written upon your best mercies, because mortality is written upon one? Fy, fy, what shameful ingratitude is here!

And really, friend, such a carriage as this under the rod is no small provocation to the Lord to go on in judgment, and make a full end of all that remains, so that affliction shall not rise up the second time.

What if God, taking notice how little thou regardest the many undeserved favours thou yet possessest, should say, well, if thou thinkest them not worth the owning, neither do I think them worth the continuing? Go, death, there is a husband, a wife, other children yet left, smite them all. Go, sickness, and remove the health of his body yet left; go losses, and impoverish his estate yet left; go, reproach, and blast his reputation, which is yet sweet; what would you think of this? And yet, if you be out of Christ, you are in danger of a far sadder stroke than any, or all yet mentioned? what if God should say, Prizest thou not my mercy? Hast thou no value for my goodness and forbearance towards thee? Is it nothing that I have spared thee thus long in thy sins and rebellions? Well then, I will stretch out my hand upon thy life, cut off that thread which hath kept thee so many years from dropping into hell.

O think then what you have done by provoking the Lord, through your vile ingratitude! It is a dangerous thing to provoke God, when he is already in a way of judgment. And if you be his own people, and so out of the danger of this last and worse stroke; yet know, you have better mercies to lose than any you have yet lost. Should God cloud your souls with doubts, let loose Satan to buffet you, remove joy and peace from your inner man, how soon would you be convinced that the funeral of your dearest friend is but a trifle to this?

Well then, whatever God takes, be still thankful for what he leaves. It was the great sin of Israel in the wilderness, that though God had delivered them from their cruel servitude in Egypt, miraculously fed them in the desert, and was leading them on to a land flowing with milk and honey; yet as soon as any want did but begin to pinch them, presently all these mercies were forgotten and slighted. Num. xiv. 12. "Would to God (say they) we had died in Egypt." And, Num. xi. 6. "There is nothing at all beside this manna." Beware of this, O ye mourning and afflicted ones. You see both the sin that is in it, and the danger that attends it.

Secondly, And no less sinful are our sorrows, *When they so wholly ingulph our hearts, that we either mind not at all, or are little or nothing sensible of the public evils and calamities which lie upon the church and people of God.*

Some Christians have such public spirits, that the church's troubles swallow up their personal troubles. Melancthon seemed to take little notice of the death of his child which he dearly loved, being almost overwhelmed with the miseries lying on the church.

And it was a good evidence of the graciousness and publicness of Eli's spirit, who sitting in the gate anxiously waiting for tidings from the army, when the tidings came that Israel fled before the Philistines, that his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas were dead, and that the ark of God was taken, just at the mention of that word, * *The Ark of God*, before he heard out the whole narration, his mind quickly presaged the issue, he sunk down and died, 1 Sam. iv. 17, 18. O that was the sinking, the killing word; had the messenger stopt at the death of his two sons, like enough he had supported that burden; but the loss of the ark was more to him than sons or daughters.

But how few such public spirits appear even among professors in this selfish generation? May we not with the apostle complain, Phil. ii. 21. "All seek their own, and not the things that are of Christ:" Few men have any great cares or designs lying beyond the bounds of their own private interest. And what we say of cares is as true of sorrows: If a child die, we are ready to die too, but public calamities pierce us not.

How few suffer either their domestic comforts to be swallowed up in the church's troubles, or their domestic troubles to be swallowed up by the church's mercies! Now when it is thus with us, we little regard what mercies or miseries lie upon others, but are wholly intent upon our own afflictions, this is a sinful sorrow, and ought to be sorrowed for.

Thirdly, Our sorrows then become sinful and exorbitant, *When they divert us from, or distract us in our duties, so that our intercourse with heaven is stopt and interrupted by them.*

How long can we sit alone musing upon a dead creature? Here our thoughts easily flow; but how hard to fix them upon the living God! when our hearts should be in heaven with our Christ, they are in the grave with our dead. May not many afflicted souls justly complain, that their troubles had taken away their Christ from them, (I mean as to sweet sensible communion) and laid the dead child in his room?

Poor creature, cease to weep any longer for thy dead relation, and weep rather for thy dead heart. Is this thy compliance with God's design in afflicting thee? What, to grow a greater stranger to him than before! Or is this the way to thy cure and comfort in affliction, to refrain prayer, and turn thy back upon God?

Or if thou darest not wholly neglect thy duty, yet thy affliction spoils the success and comfort of it; thy heart is wandering, dead, distracted in prayer and meditation, so that thou hast no relief or comfort from it.

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* *Cumque ille nominasset arcam Dei:* q. d. *nondum integram, sed inchoatam audiens narrationem, mente prævolans, et exitum præsagiens ruebat.* Mercer. in loc.

Rouse up thyself, Christian, and consider this is not right. Surely the rod works not kindly now. What, did thy love to God expire when thy friend expired? Is thy heart as cold in duty, as his body is in the grave.

Hath natural death seized him, and spiritual deadness seized thee? Sure then thou hast more reason to lament thy dead heart, than thy dead friend. Divert the stream of thy troubles speedily, and labour to recover thyself out of this temper quickly; lest sad experience shortly tell thee, that what thou now mournest for is but a trifle to what thou shalt mourn for hereafter. To lose the heavenly warmth and spiritual liveliness of thy affections, is undoubtedly a far more considerable loss, than to lose the wife of thy bosom, or the sweetest child that ever a tender parent laid in the grave.

Reader, if this be thy case, thou hast reason to challenge the first place among the mourners. It is better for thee to bury ten sons, than to remit one degree of love or delight in God. The end of God in smiting was to win thy heart nearer to him by removing that which estranged it; how then dost thou cross the very design of God in this dispensation? Must God then lose his delight in thy fellowship, because thou hast lost thine in the creature? Surely, when thy troubles thus accompany thee to thy closet, they are sinful and extravagant troubles.

Fourthly, Then you may also conclude your sorrows to be excessive and sinful, *When they so overload and opprsss your bodies, as to endanger your lives, or render them useless and unfit for service.*

Worldly sorrow works death, 2 Cor. vii. 10. that is, sorrow after the manner of worldly men *; sorrow in a mere carnal, natural way, which is not relieved by any spiritual reasonings and considerations. This falls so heavy sometimes upon the body, that it sinks under the weight, and is cast into such diseases as are never more wrought off, or healed in this world. "Heaviness in the heart of a man makes "it stoop," saith Solomon, Prov. xii. 25. The stoutest body must stoop under heart-pressures.

It is with the mind of a man, saith one, as with the stone *tyrhenus*: as long as it is whole it swimmeth; but once broken, it sinks presently. Grief is a moth, which, getting into the mind, will, in a short time, make the body, be it never so strong and well-wrought a piece, like an old seary garment.

Philosophers and physicians generally reckon sorrow among the chief causes of shortening life. Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and this some think was the reason that he appeared as a man of fifty, when he was little more than thirty years old, John viii. 57. But his sorrows were of another kind †.

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* Worldly sorrow is after the manner of the world, arising from the love of it. *Estius on the place.*

† These things write I unto you, who have wept so immoderately, that I am be-

Many a man's soul is to his body, as a sharp knife to a thin sheath, which easily cuts it through; and what do we by poring and pondering upon our troubles, but whet the knife that it may cut the deeper and quicker? Of all the creatures that ever God made (devils only excepted) man is the most able and apt to be his own tormentor.

How unmercifully do we load our bodies in times of afflictions? How do we not only waste their strength by sorrow, but deny relief and necessary refreshment? They must carry the load, but be allowed no refreshment: If they can eat the bread of affliction, and drink tears, they may feed to the full; but no pleasant bread, no quiet sleep is permitted them. Surely you would not burden a beast as you do your own bodies: You would pity and relieve a brute beast, groaning and sinking under an heavy burden, but you will not pity nor relieve your own bodies.

Some men's souls have given such deep wounds to their bodies, that they are never like to enjoy many easy or comfortable days more whilst they dwell in them.

Now, this is very sinful and displeasing to God; for if he have such a tender care for our bodies, that he would not have us swallowed up of over much grief, no, though it be for sin, 2 Cor. ii. 7. but even to that sorrow sets bounds; how much less with outward sorrow for temporal loss? May not your stock of natural strength be employed to better purposes, think you, than these? Time may come, that you may earnestly wish you had that health and strength again to spend for God, which you now so lavishly waste, and prodigally cast away upon your troubles, to no purpose or advantage.

It was therefore an high point of wisdom in David, and recorded no doubt for our imitation, who, when the child was dead ceased to mourn, arose, washed himself, and eat bread, 2 Sam. xii. 20.

Fifthly, when affliction sours the spirit with discontent, and makes it inwardly grudge against the hand of God, then our trouble is full of sin, and we ought to be humbled for it before the Lord.

Whatever God doth with us, or ours, still we should maintain good thoughts of him. A gracious heart cleaves nearer and nearer to God in affliction, and can justify God in his severe strokes, acknowledging them to be all just and holy, Psal. cxix. 75. "I know "also that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness "hast afflicted me." And hereby the soul may comfortably evidence to itself its own uprightness and sincere love to God; yea, it hath been of singular use to some souls, to take right measures of their love to God in such trials: to have lovely and well-pleased thoughts of God, even when he smites us in our nearest and dear-

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come an example (which I always abhorred) of those whom grief hath overcome. Yet this unreasonable conduct I now condemn myself for. *Senec.*

est comforts, argues plainly that we love him for himself, and not for his gifts only. And thus his interest in the heart is deeper than any creature-interest is. And such is the comfort that hath resulted to some from such discoveries of their own hearts by close smarting afflictions, that they would not part with it, to have their comforts (whose removal occasioned them) given back in lieu of it.

But to swell with secret discontent, and have hard thoughts of God, as if he had done us wrong, or dealt more severely with us than any; O this is a vile temper, cursed fruit springing from an evil root; a very carnal, ignorant, proud heart; or at least from a very distempered, if renewed, heart. So it was with Jonah when God smote his gourd: "Yea, (saith he) I do well to be angry even unto death," Jonah iv. 9. Poor man! he was highly distempered at this time, and out of frame; this was not his true temper, or ordinary frame, but a surprize; the effect of a paroxism of temptation, in which his passions had been over-heated.

Few dare to vent it in such language: But how many have their hearts imbittered by discontent, and secret risings against the Lord? Which, if ever the Lord open their eyes to see, will cost them more trouble than ever that affliction did, which gave the occasion of it.

I deny not but the best heart may be tempted to think and speak frowardly concerning these works of the Lord; that envious adversary, the devil, will blow the coals, and labour to blow up our spirits at such times into high discontents: The temptation was strong even upon David himself, to take up hard thoughts of God, and to conclude, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain;" q. d. How little privilege from the worst of evils hath a man by his godliness? But he soon suppressed such motions: "If I should say thus, I should "offend against the generation of thy children:" Meaning, that he should condemn the whole race of godly men through the whole world; for who is there among them all, but is, or hath been, or may be, afflicted as severely as myself?

"Surely, it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastise-"ment, I will not offend any more," Job xxxiv. 31. Whatever God doth with you, speak well, and think well of him, and his works.

Sixthly, *Our sorrows exceed due bounds when we continually excite and provoke them by willing irritations.*

Grief, like a lion, loves to play with us before it destroy us. And strange it is that we should find some kind of pleasure in rousing our sorrows. It is * Seneca's observation, and experimentally true, that even sorrow itself hath a certain kind of delight attending it.

The Jews, that were with Mary in the house to comfort her,

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* Sorrow itself has a certain kind of pleasure attending it; when the parents call to mind the pleasant sayings, the cheerful conversation, and the filial affection of their children, then their eyes are refreshed as it were with a kind of joy.

" When they saw that she went out hastily, followed her, saying, " she goeth to the grave to weep there," John xi. 32. as they do, saith* Calvin, ' that seek to provoke their troubles, by going to the ' grave, or often looking upon the dead body.'

Thus we delight to look upon the relics of our deceased friends, and often to mention their actions, and sayings, not so much for any matter of holy, and weighty instruction, or imitation, for that would warrant, and commend the action; but rather to rub the wound, and fetch fresh blood from it, by piercing ourselves with some little trivial, yet wounding circumstances. I have known many that will sit and talk of the features, actions and sayings, of their children, for hours together, and weep at the rehearsal of them, and that for many months after they are gone; so keeping the wound continually open, and excruciating their own hearts, without any benefit at all by them: A lock of hair, or some such trifles, must be kept for this purpose to renew their sorrow daily, by looking on it. On this account, Jacob would not have his son called Benoni, lest it should renew his sorrow, but Benjamin.

I am far from commending a brutish oblivion of our dear relations, and condemn it as much as I do this childish and unprofitable remembrance. O friends! we have other things to do under the rod, than these: Were it not better to be searching our hearts, and houses, when God's rod is upon us, and studying how to answer the end of it, by mortifying those corruptions which provoke it? Surely the rod works not kindly till it comes to this.

Seventhly, Lastly, Our sorrows may then be pronounced sinful, when they deafen our ears to all the wholesome, and seasonable words of counsel, and comfort, offered us for our relief, and support. Jer. xxxi. 15. " A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and " bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children, would not be " comforted for her children, because they were not." She will admit no comfort, her disease is curable by no other means but the restoration of her children; give her them again, and she will be quiet; else you speak unto air, she regards not whatever you say.

Thus Israel, in the cruel bondage in Egypt, Moses brings them the glad tidings of deliverance; " But they hearkened not to him, " because of the anguish of spirit, and their cruel bondage," Exod. vi. 9.

Thus obstinately fixed are many, in their trouble, that no words of advice, or comfort, find any place with them; yea, I have known some exceeding quick and ingenious, even above the rate of their common parts and abilities, in inventing shifts, and framing objections to turn off comfort from themselves, as if they had been hired to plead against their own interest; and if they be driven from those pleas, yet they are settled in their troubles, too fast to be moved;

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* *Ex eorum more qui luctus sui irritamenta quærunt.* Calvin.

say what you will, they mind it not, or, at most it abides not upon them. Let proper, seasonable advice, or comfort be tendered, they refuse it; your counsel is good, but they have no heart to it now. Thus, Psal. lxxvii. 10. "My soul (saith he) refused to be "comforted."

To want comfort in time of affliction, is an aggravation of our affliction; but to refuse it when offered us, wants not sin. Time may come when we would be glad to receive comfort, or hear a word of support, and shall be denied it.

O it is a mercy to the afflicted to have Barnabas with them, an interpreter, one among a thousand; and it will be the great sin, and folly of the afflicted, to spill like water upon the ground, those excellent cordials, prepared and offered to them, out of a froward, or dead spirit, under trouble. Say not with them, Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is perished from the Lord, remembering mine affliction "and my misery, the wormwood and the gall." It is a thousand pities the wormwood and gall of affliction should so disgust a Christian, as that he should not at any time be able to relish the sweetness that is in Christ, and in the promises. And thus I have dispatched the first part of my design, in shewing you wherein the sin of mourners doth not lie, and in what it doth.

Secondly, Having cleared this, and shewn you wherein the sin and danger lies; my way is now prepared to the second thing proposed, namely, to dissuade mourners from these sinful excesses of sorrows, and keep the golden bridle of moderation upon their passions in times of affliction. And O that my words may be as successful upon those pensive souls that shall read them, as Abigail's were to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. who, when he perceived how proper and seasonable they were, said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee "this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice."

I am sensible how hard a task it is I here undertake, to charm down and allay mutinous, raging, and tumultuous passions; to give a check to the torrent of passion, is ordinarily but to provoke it, and make it rage and swell the more.

The work is the Lord's, it wholly depends upon his power and blessing. He that saith to the sea when the waves thereof roar, be still, can also quiet and compose the stormy and tumultuous sea, that rages in the breasts of the afflicted, and casts up nothing but the froth of vain and useless complaints of our misery, or the dirt of sinful and wicked complaints of the dealings of the Lord with us.

The rod of affliction goes round, and visits all sorts of persons, without difference; it is upon the tabernacles of the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked; both are mourning under the rod.

The godly are not so to be minded, as that the other be wholly neglected; they have as strong and tender, though not as regular affections to their relations, and must not be wholly suffered to sink under their unrelieved burdens.

Here, therefore, I must have respect to two sorts of persons, whom I find in tears upon the same account; I mean, the loss of their dear relations, the regenerate, and the unregenerate. I am a debtor to both, and shall endeavour their support and assistance, for even the unregenerate call for our help and pity, and must not be neglected and wholly slighted in their afflictions. We must pity them that cannot pity themselves *. The law of God commands us to help a beast, if fallen under its burden; how much more a man sinking under a load of sorrows?

I confess, uses of comfort to the unregenerate are not (ordinarily) in use among us, and it may seem strange whence any thing of support should be drawn for them that have no special interest in Christ or the promises.

I confess also I find myself under great disadvantages for this work; I cannot offer them those reviving cordials that are contained in Christ and the covenant, for God's afflicted people; but yet, such is the goodness of God even to his enemies, that they are not left wholly without supports or means to allay their sorrow.

If this, therefore, be thy case, who readest these lines; afflicted and unsanctified, mourning bitterly for thy dead friends, and more cause to mourn for thy dead soul, christless and graceless, as well as childless or friendless: no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope; full of trouble, and no vent by prayer or faith to ease thy heart.

Poor creature! thy case is sad, but yet do not wholly sink and suffer thyself to be swallowed up of grief: thou hast laid thy dear one in the grave, yet throw not thyself headlong into the grave after him; that will not be the way to remedy thy misery: but sit down a while, and ponder these three things.

First, *That of all persons in the world, thou hast most reason to be tender over thy life and health, and careful to preserve it: for if thy troubles destroy thee, thou art eternally lost, undone for ever.* "Worldly sorrow (saith the apostle) works death." And if it works thy death, it works thy damnation also; for hell follows that pale horse, Rev. vi. 8. If a believer die, there is no danger of hell to him, the second death hath no power over him; but woe to thee if it overtake thee in thy sin: beware, therefore, what thou dost against thy health and life; do not put the candle of sorrow too near that thread by which thou hangest over the mouth of hell.

O it is far better to be childless or friendless on earth, than hopeless and remediless in hell.

Secondly, Own and admire the bounty and goodness of God manifested to thee in this affliction; that when death came into thy family to smite and carry off one, it had not fallen to thy lot to be the person; thy husband, wife, or child is taken, and thou art left: had

* *Nihil miserius misero non miscrante seipsum*, i. e. None is more to be pitied than a poor sinner that does not pity himself.

thy name been in the commission, thou hadst been now past hope.

O the sparing mercy of God! the wonderful long-suffering of God towards thee! Possibly that poor creature that is gone never provoked God as thou hast done: thy poor child never abused mercies, neglected calls, treasured up the ten thousandth part of that guilt that thou hast done: so that thou mightest well imagine it should rather have cut thee down, that hadst so provoked God, than thy poor little one.

But, O the admirable patience of God! O the riches of his long-suffering! Thou art only warned, not smitten by it: is there nothing in this worth thankful acknowledgment? Is it not better to be in black for another on earth, than in the blackness of darkness for ever? Is it not easier to go to the grave with thy dead friend, and weep there, than to go to hell among the damned, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth?

Thirdly, This affliction for which thou mournest, may be the greatest mercy to thee that ever yet befel thee in this world. God hath now made thy heart soft by trouble, shewed thee the vanity of this world, and what a poor trifle it is which thou madest thy happiness: there is now a dark cloud spread over all thy worldly comforts. Now, O now! if the Lord would but strike in with this affliction, and by it open thine eyes to see thy deplorable state, and take off thy heart for ever from the vain world, which thou now seest hath nothing in it; and cause thee to chuse Christ, the only abiding good for thy portion. If now thy affliction may but bring thy sin to remembrance, and thy dead friend may but bring thee to a sense of thy dead soul, which is as cold to God and spiritual things, as his body is to thee; and more loathsome in his eyes than that corpse is, or shortly will be to the eyes of men: then this day is certainly a day of the greatest mercy that ever yet thou sawest. O happy death, that shall prove life to thy soul.

Why this is sometimes the way of the Lord with men, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. "If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, "then he sheweth them their work and their transgression, that "they have exceeded: he openeth also their ear to discipline, and "commandeth them that they shall return from iniquity."

O consider, poor pensive creature, that which stole away thy heart from God is now gone; that which eat up thy time and thoughts, that there was no room for God, soul, or eternity in them, is gone; all the vain expectations that thou raisedst up unto thyself, from that poor creature which now lies in the dust, are in one day quite perished. O what an advantage hast thou now for heaven, beyond whatever thou yet hadst! if God will but bless this rod, thou wilt have cause to keep many a thanksgiving day for this day.

I pray, let these three things be pondered by you. I can bestow no more comforts upon you, your condition bars the best comforts

from you, they belong to the people of God, and you have yet nothing to do with them.

I shall therefore turn from you to them, and present some choicer comforts to them, to whom they properly belong, which may be of great use to you in reading, if it be but to convince you of the blessed privilege and state of the people of God in the greatest plunges of troubles in this world, and what advantages their interest in Christ gives them for peace and settlement, beyond that state you are in.

And here I do with much more freedom and hope of success, apply myself to the work of counselling and comforting the afflicted. You are the fearers of the Lord, and tremble at his word; the least sin is more formidable to you than the greatest affliction: doubtless you would rather chuse to bury all your children, than provoke and grieve your heavenly Father. Your relations are dear, but Christ is dearer to you by far.

Well then, let me persuade you to retire a while into your closets, redeem a little time from your unprofitable sorrows, ease and empty your hearts before the Lord, and beg his blessing upon the relieving, quieting, and heart-composing considerations that follow: some of which are more general and common, some more particular and special; but all of them such as, through the blessing of God, may be very useful at this time to your souls.

Consideration 1. *Consider, in this day of sorrow, who is the framer and author of this rod by which you now smart; is it not the Lord? And if the Lord hath done it, it becomes you meekly to submit.* Psal. xlvi. 10. "Be still, and know that I am God."

Man and man stand upon even ground; if your fellow-creature does any thing that displeases you, you may not only enquire who did it, but why he did it? You may demand his grounds and reasons for what he hath done; but you may not do so here: It is expected that this one thing, *The Lord hath done it*, should, without any farther disputes or contests, silence and quiet you, whatever it be that he hath done. Job xxxiii. 13. "Why dost thou strive against "him? For he giveth not an account of any of his matters." The Supreme being must needs be an unaccountable and uncontroulable Being.

It is a shame for a child to strive with his father; a shame for a servant to contend with his master; but for a creature to quarrel and strive with the God that made him, O how shameful is it! Surely it is highly reasonable that you be subject to that will whence you proceeded, and that he who formed you and yours should dispose of both as seemeth him good. It is said, 2 Sam. iii. 36. "That what-"soever the king did pleased all the people:" And shall any thing the Lord doth displease you? He can do no wrong. If we pluck a rose in the bud as we walk in our gardens, who shall blame us for it? It is our own, and we may crop it off when we please: Is not this the case? Thy sweet bud, which was cropt off before it was fully blown,

was cropt off by him that owned it, yea, by him that formed it. If his dominion be absolute, sure his disposal should be acceptable.

It was so to good Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do "what seemeth him good:" And it was so to David, Psal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." O let it be for ever remembered, "That he whose name alone is Jeho-"vah, is the Most High over all the earth," Psalm lxxxiii. 18.

The glorious sovereignty of God, is illustriously displayed in two things, his decrees and his providences: With respect to the first he saith, Rom. ix. 15. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Here is no ground of disputing with him; for so it is said, ver. 20. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing "formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Hath not the pottter power over the clay?

And as to his providences, wherein his sovereignty is also manifested; it is said, Zech. ii. 14. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the "Lord, for he is raised up out of his habitation." It is spoken of his providential working in the changes of kingdoms and desolations that attend them.

Now, seeing the case stands thus, that the Lord hath done it: it is his pleasure to have it so, and that if it had not been his will, it could never have been as it is; he that gave thee (rather lent thee) thy relation hath also taken him: O how quiet should this consideration leave thee? If your landlord, who has many years suffered you to dwell in his house, does at last warn you out of it, though he tells you not why; you will not contend with him, or say he has done you wrong: Much less if he tells you it will be more for his profit and accommodation to take it into his own hand, than let it to you any longer.

Doubtless, reason will tell you, you ought quietly to pack up and quit it. It is your great landlord, from whom you hold (at pleasure) your own, and your relations lives, that hath now warned you out from one of them, it being more for his glory, it may be, to take it in his own hands, by death; and must you dispute the case with him?

Come, Christian, this no way becomes thee, but rather, "The "Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name "of the Lord." Look off from a dead creature, lift up thine eyes to the sovereign, wise, and holy pleasure that ordered this affliction: Consider who he is, and what thou art; yea, pursue this consideration till thou canst say, I am now filled with the will of God.

Consideration 2. *Ponder well the quality of the comfort you are deprived of, and remember, that when you had it, it stood but in the rank and order of common and inferior comforts.*

Children, and all other relations are but common blessings, which God indifferently betows upon his friends and enemies: and by the having or losing of them, no man knows either love or hatred. It is

said of the wicked, Psal. lxxvii. 14. that they are full of children; yea, and of children that do survive them too; for *they leave their substance to their babes.* Full of sin, yet full of children, and these children live to inherit their parents sins and estates together.

It is the mistaking of the quality and nature of our enjoyments, that so plunges us into trouble when we lose them. We think there is so necessary a connection betwixt these creatures and our happiness that we are utterly undone when they fail us.

But this is our mistake; there is no such necessary connection or dependence; we may be happy without these things: It is not father, mother, wife, or child, in which our chief good and felicity lies; we have higher, better, and more enduring things than these; all these may perish, and yet our soul be secure and safe; yea, and our comfort in the way, as well as end, may be safe enough, though these are gone: God hath better things to comfort his people with than these, and worse rods to afflict you with than the removal of these. Had God let your children live and flourish; and given you ease and rest in your tabernacle, but in the mean time inflicted spiritual judgments upon your souls; how much more sad had your case been?

But as long as our best mercies are all safe, the things that have salvation in them remain, and only the things that have vanity in them are removed; you are not prejudiced, or much hindered as to the attainment of your last end, by the loss of these things.

Alas! it was not Christ's intent to purchase for you a sensual content in the enjoyment of these earthly comforts; but to redeem you from all iniquity, purge your corruptions, sanctify your natures, wean your hearts from this vain world, and so to dispose and order your present condition, that, finding no rest and content here, you might the more ardently pant and sigh after the rest which remains for the people of God. And are you not in as probable a way to attain this end now, as you were before? Do you think you are not as likely, by these methods of providence, to be weaned from the world, as by more pleasant and prosperous ones? Every wise man reckons that station and condition to be best for him, which most promotes and secures his last end and great design.

Well then, reckon you are as well without these things as with them; yea, and better too, if they were but clogs and snares upon your affections; you have really lost nothing if the things wherein your eternal happiness consisteth be yet safe. Many of God's dearest children have been denied such comforts as these, and many have been deprived of them, and yet never the farther from Christ and heaven for that.

Consideration 3. *Always remember, that how soon and unexpected soever your parting with your relations was, yet your lease was expired before you lost them, and you enjoyed them every moment of the time that God intended them for you.*

Before this relation, whose loss you lament, was born, the time of your enjoyment and separation was unalterably fixed and limited in heaven by the God of the spirits of all flesh: And although it was a secret to you whilst your friend was with you; yet now it is a plain and evident thing that this was the time of separation before appointed; and that the life of your friend could by no means be protracted or abbreviated, but must keep your company just so far, and then part with you.

This position wants no full and clear scripture authority for its foundation: How pregnant and full is that text, Job xxiv. 5, 6. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with "thee: thou hast appointed him his bounds, which he cannot pass."

The time of our life, as well as the place of your habitation was prefixed before we were born.

It will greatly conduce to your settlement and peace to be well established in this truth; that the appointed time was fully come when you and your dear relation parted; for it will prevent and save a great deal of trouble which comes from our after-reflections.

O if this had been done, or that omitted; had it not been for such miscarriages and oversights, my dear husband, wife, or child, had been alive at this day! No, the Lord's time was fully come, and all things concurred, and fell in together to bring about the pleasure of his will; let that satisfy you: Had the ablest physicians in the world been there, or had they that were there prescribed another course, as it is now, so it would have been when they had done all. Only it must be precautioned, that the decree of God no way excuses any voluntary, or sinful neglects or miscarriages. God over-rules these things to serve his own ends, but no way approves them; but it greatly relieves, against all our involuntary and unavoidable oversights and mistakes about the use of means, or the timing of them; for it could not be otherwise than now it is.

Objection. But many things are alleged against this position, and that with much seeming countenance from such scriptures as these; Psal. liv. 25. "Blood-thirsty men shall not live out half their days." Eccl. vii. 18. "Why shouldst thou die before thy time." Psal. cii. 24. "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." Isa. xxvii. 10. "I am deprived of the residue of my years." And, Prov. x. 27. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the "wicked shall be shortened." It is demanded what tolerable sense we can give these scriptures, whilst we assert an unalterable fixation of the term of death.

Solution. The sense of all these scriptures will be cleared up to full satisfaction, by distinguishing death and the terms of it.

First, We must distinguish death into Natural and Violent.

The wicked and blood-thirsty man shall not live out half his days; i. e. half so long as he might live, according to the course of nature,

or the vigour and soundness of his natural constitution; for his wickedness either drowns nature in an excess of riot and luxury, or exposes him to the hand of justice, which cuts him off for his wickedness before he hath accomplished half his days.

Again, we must distinguish of the term or limit for death, which is either General, or Special.

The general limits are now seventy or eighty years, Psal. xc. 19. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason "of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and "sorrow." To this short limit the life of man is generally reduced since the flood; and though there are some few exceptions, yet the general rule is not thereby destroyed.

The special limit is that proportion of time, which God, by his own counsel and will hath allotted to every individual person; and it is only known to us by the event: This we affirm to be a fixed, and immoveable term; with it all things shall fall in, and observe the will of God in our dissolution at that time. But because the general limit is known, and this special limit is a secret hid in God's own breast; therefore man reckons by the former account, and may be said, when he dies at thirty, or forty years old, to be cut off in the midst of his days: For it is so, reckoning by the general account, though he be not cut off till the end of his days, reckoning by the special limit.

Thus he that is wicked, dies before his time; (i. e.) the time he might attain to in an ordinary way; but not before the time God hath appointed: And so in all other objected scriptures.

It is not proper at all, in a subject of this nature, to digress into a controversy: Alas! the poor mourner, overwhelmed with grief, hath no pleasure in that; it is not proper for him at this time, and therefore I shall, for the present, wave the controversy, and wind up this consideration with an humble, and serious motion to the afflicted, that they will wisely consider the matter. The Lord's time was come, your relations lived with you every moment that God intended them for you before you had them.

O parents! mind this, I beseech you; the time of your child's continuance in the womb, was fixed to a minute by the Lord; and when the parturient fulness of that time was come, were you not willing it should be delivered thence into the world? The tender mother would not have it abide one minute longer in the womb, how well soever she loved it; and is there not the same reason we should be willing, when God's appointed time is come to have it delivered by death out of this state, which, in respect of the life of heaven, is but as the life of a child in the womb, to its life in the open world.

And let none say the death of children is a premature death. God hath ways to ripen them for heaven, whom he intends to gather thither betimes, the which we know not: in respect of fitness, they die in a full age, though they be cut off in the bud of their time.

He that appointed the seasons of the year appointed the seasons of our comfort in our relations: And as those seasons cannot be altered, no more can these. All the course of providence is guided by an unalterable decree; what falls out casually to our apprehension, yet falls out necessarily in respect of God's appointment.

O therefore be quieted in it, this must needs be as it is.

Consider. 4. *Hath God smitten your darling, and taken away the delight of your eyes with this stroke? Bear this stroke with patience and quiet submission: For how know you but your trouble mighthave been greater from the life, than it now is from the death of your children?*

Sad experience made a holy man once say, It is better to weep for ten dead children, than for one living child: A living child may prove a continual dropping, yea, a continual dying to the parent's heart. What a sad word was that of David to Abishai, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Behold, (saith he) my son, which came out of my bowels, "seeketh my life." I remember Seneca, in his consolatory epistle to his friend Marullus, brings in his friend thus aggravating the death of his child.

'O, (saith Marullus) had my child lived with me, to how great 'modesty, gravity, and prudence, might my discipline have formed 'and moulded him? But, saith * Seneca, (which is more to be fear-'ed) he might have been as others mostly are; for look, (saith he) 'what children come even out of the worthiest families; such who 'exercise both their own, and others lusts; in all whose life there is 'not a day without the mark of some notorious wickedness upon it.'

I know your tender love to your children will scarce admit such jealousies of them; they are for the present, sweet, lovely, innocent companions, and you doubt not but by your care of their education, and prayer for them, they might have been the joy of your hearts.

Why doubtless Esau, when he was little, and in his tender age, promised as much comfort to his parents as Jacob did; and I question not but Isaac and Rebecca (a glorious pair) spent as many prayers, and bestowed as many holy counsels upon him, as they did upon his brother; But when the child grew up to riper years, then he became a sharp affliction to his parents; for it is said, Gen. xxvi. 34. "That when Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith the "daughter of Berith the Hittite, which was a grief of mind to Isaac "and Rebecca." The word in the original comes from a root that signifies to imbitter †: This child imbittered the minds of his parents by his rebellion against them, and despising their counsels.

And I cannot doubt but Abraham disciplined his family as strictly as any of you; never man received a higher encomium from God upon that account, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will com-"mand his children and his household after him, and they shall "keep the way of the Lord." Nor can I think but he bestowed as

* Seneca's Epistles. p. 84. † *Erat amaritudo animi.*

many and as frequent prayers for his children, and particularly for his son Ishmael, as any of you: We find one, and that a very pathetical one, recorded, Gen. xvii. 18. "O that Ishmael might live be-"fore thee:" And yet you know how he proved, a son that yieldeth him no more comfort than Esau did to Jacob and Rebecca.

O how much more common is it for parents to see the vices and evils of their children, than their virtues and graces? And where one parent lives to rejoice in beholding the grace of God shining forth in the life of his child, there are twenty, it may be an hundred that live to behold, to their vexation and grief, the workings of corruption in them.

It is a note of * Plutarch, in his morals, Nicoles (saith he) lived not to see the noble victory obtained by Themistocles his son; nor Miltiades, to see the battle his son Cimon won in the field; nor Zantippus, to hear his son Pericles preach and make orations. Ariston never heard his son Plato's lectures and disputations; but men (saith he) commonly live to see their children fall a gaming, revelling, drinking, and whoring: Multitudes live to see such things to their sorrow. And if thou be a gracious soul, O what a cut would this be to thy very heart! to see those (as David spake of his Absalom) that came out of thy bowels, to be sinning against God, that God whom thou lovest, and whose honour is dearer to thee than thy very life!

But admit they should prove civil and hopeful children, yet mightest thou not live to see more misery come upon them than thou couldst endure to see? O think what a sad and doleful sight was that to Zedekiah, Jer. l. 10. "The king of Babylon brought his children, and "slew them before his eyes." Horrid spectacle! and that leads to,

Consider. 5. *How know you, but by this stroke which you so lament, God hath taken them away from the evil to come?*

Is it God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to hide some of his weak and tender ones out of the way by death, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. he leaves some, and removes others, but taketh care for the security of all. He provided a grave for Methuselah before the flood. The grave is an hiding-place to some, and God sees it better for them to be under-ground than above ground in such evil days.

Just as a careful and tender father, who hath a son abroad at school, hearing the plague is broke out in or near the place, sends his horse presently to fetch home his son before the danger and difficulty be greater. Death is our Father's pale horse which he sends to fetch home his tender children, and carry them out of harm's way.

Surely when national calamities are drawing on, it is far better for our friends to be in the grave in peace, than exposed to the miseries and distresses that are here, which is the meaning of Jer. xxii. 10. "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep for

* Plutarch's Morals, p. 122.

" him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his " native country."

And is there not a dreadful sound of troubles now in our ears? Do not the clouds gather blackness? Surely all things round about us seem to be preparing and disposing themselves for affliction. The days may be nigh in which you shall say, " Blessed is the womb " that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck."

It was in the day wherein the faith and patience of the saints were exercised, that John heard a voice from heaven, saying to him, " Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence- " forth."

Thy friend by an act of favour is disbanded by death, whilst thou thyself art left to endure a great fight of affliction. And now if troubles come, thy cares and fears will be so much the less, and thy own death so much the easier to thee; when so much of thee is in heaven already. In this case the Lord, by a merciful dispensation, is providing both for their safety, and thy own easier passage to them.

In removing thy friends before-hand, he seems to say to thee, as he did to Peter, John xiii. 7. " What I do thou knowest not now, " but thou shalt know hereafter." The eye of providence hath a prospect far beyond thine; probably it would be a harder task for thee to leave them behind, than to follow them.

A tree that is deeply rooted in the earth, requires many strokes to fell it; but when its roots are loosed before-hand, then an easy stroke lays down upon the earth.

Consider. 6. *A parting time must needs come, and why is not this as good as another?* You knew before-hand your child or friend was mortal, and that the thread that linked you together must be cut. If any one, (saith Basil), had asked you when your child was born, What is that which is born? What would you have answered? Would you not have said, It is a man? And if a man, then a mortal, vanishing thing. And why then are you surprized with wonder to see a dying thing dead?

He, (saith * Seneca), who complains that one is dead, complains that he was a man. All men are under the same condition, to whose share it falls to be born, to him it remains to die.

We are indeed distinguished by the intervals, but equalized in the issue: " It is appointed to all men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. There is a statute law of heaven in the case.

Possibly you think this is the worst time for parting that could be; had you enjoyed it longer, you could have parted easier; but how are you deceived in that? The longer you had enjoyed it, the more loth still you would have been to leave it; the deeper it would have rooted itself in your affection.

* Bear the law of necessity with an even mind. How many besides you must sorrow! *Seneca, Epistle* 99.

Had God given you such a privilege as was once granted to the English parliament; that the union betwixt you and your friend should not be dissolved till you yourself were willing it should be dissolved; when, think you, would you have been willing it should be dissolved?

It is well for us and ours that our times are in God's hand, and not in our own. And how immature soever it seemed to be when it was cut down; yet it "came to the grave in a full age, as a shock of "corn in its season," Job v. 26. They that are in Christ, and in the covenant, never die unseasonably, whensoever they die (saith * one upon the text), 'They die in a good old age; yea, though they 'die in the spring and flower of youth; they die in a good old age; 'i. e. they are ripe for death whenever they die. Whenever the 'godly die, it is harvest time with him; though in a natural capacity 'he be cut down while he is green, and cropt in the bud or blossom; 'yet in his spiritual capacity he never dies before he is ripe; God can 'ripen him speedily, he can let out such warm rays and beams of his 'Holy Spirit upon them, as shall soon mature the seeds of grace 'into a preparedness for glory.'

It was doubtless the most fit and seasonable time for them that ever they could die in, and as it is a fit time for them, so for you also. Had it lived longer, it might either have engaged you more, and so your parting would have been harder; or else have puzzled and stumbled you more by discovering its natural corruption: and then what a stinging aggravation of your sorrow would that have been?

Surely the Lord of time is the best judge of time; and in nothing do we more discover our folly and rashness, than in presuming to fix the times either of our comforts or troubles; as for our comforts, we never think they can come too soon; we would have them presently, whether the season be fit or not, as Num. xii. 13. "Heal her now, "Lord." O let it be done speedily; we are in post-haste for our comforts, and for our afflictions we never think they come late enough; not at this time, Lord, rather at any other time than now.

But it is good to leave the timeing both of the one and the other to him, whose works are all beautiful in their seasons, and never doth any thing in an improper time.

Consider. 7. *Call to mind in this day of trouble, the covenant you have with God, and what you solemnly promised him in the day you took him for your God.*

It will be very seasonable and useful for thee, Christian, at this time to reflect upon these transactions, and the frame of thy heart in those days, when an heavier load of sorrow prest thy heart, than thou now feelest.

In those your spiritual distresses, when the burden of sin lay heavy, the curse of the law, the fear of hell, the dread of death and eternity beset thee on every side, and shut thee up to Christ, the only

* Caryl. on the place.

door of hope; ah! what good news wouldst thou then have accounted it, to escape that danger with the loss of all earthly comforts!

Was not this thy cry in those days? 'Lord, give me Christ, and 'deny me whatever else thou pleasest. Pardon my sin, save my soul, 'and, in order to both, unite me with Christ, and I will never repine 'or open my mouth. Do what thou wilt with me; let me be 'friendless, let me be childless, let me be poor, let me be any thing 'rather than a christless, graceless, hopeless soul.'

And when the Lord hearkened to thy cry, and shewed thee mercy; when he drew thee off from the world into thy closet, and there treated with thee in secret, when he was working up thy heart to the terms of his covenant, and made thee willing to accept Christ upon his own terms; O then, how heartily didst thou submit to his yoke, as most reasonable and easy, as at that time it seemed to thee?

Call to mind these days, the secret places where Christ and you made the bargain; have not these words, or words to this sense, been whispered by thee into his ear with a dropping eye, and melting heart?

'Lord Jesus, here am I, a poor guilty sinner, deeply laden with 'sin; fear and trouble upon one hand, and there is a just God, a 'severe law, and everlasting burnings, on the other hand; but 'blessed be God, O blessed be God for Jesus the Mediator, who in-'terposeth betwixt me and it. Thou art the only door of hope at 'which I can escape, thy blood the only means of my pardon and 'salvation. Thou hast said, "Come unto me all ye that labour, 'and are heavy laden." Thou hast promised, that he that cometh 'to thee, shall in no wise be cast out.

'Blessed Jesus, thy poor creature cometh to thee upon these en-'couragements: I come, O but it is with many staggerings, with 'many doubts and fears of the issue; yet I am willing to come and 'make a covenant with thee this day.

'I take thee this day to be my Lord, and submit heartily to all thy 'disposals; do what thou wilt with me, or mine, let me be rich or 'poor, any thing or nothing in this world: I am willing to be as 'thou wouldst have me, and I do likewise give myself to thee this 'day, to be thine; all I am, all I have shall be thine, thine to serve 'thee, and thine to be disposed of at thy pleasure. Thou shalt 'henceforth be my highest Lord, my chiefest good, my last end.'

Now, Christian, make good to Christ what thou so solemnly promised him: He, I say, he hath disposed of this thy dear relation, as pleased him, and is thereby trying thy uprightness in the covenant which thou madest with him: Now where is the satisfaction and content thou promisedst to take in all his disposals? Where is that covenanted submission to his will? Didst thou except this affliction that is come upon thee?

Didst thou tell him, Lord, I will be content thou shalt, when thou pleasest, take any thing I have, save only this husband, this wife, or

this dear child; I reserve this out of the bargain? I shall never endure that thou shouldst kill this comfort. If so, thou didst in all this but prove thyself an hypocrite; if thou wast sincere in thy covenant, as Christ had no reserve on his part, so thou hadst none on thine.

It was all without any exception thou then resignedst to him, and now wilt thou go back from thy word, as one that had out-promised himself, and repents the bargain? Or, at least, as one that hath forgotten these solemn transactions in the days of thy distress? Wherein hath Christ failed in one tittle that he promised thee? Charge him, if thou canst, with the least unfaithfulness; he hath been faithful to a tittle on his part, O be thou so upon thine; this day it is put to the proof, remember what thou hast promised him.

Consider. 8. *But if thy covenant with God will not quiet thee, yet methinks God's covenant with thee might be presumed to do it.*

Is thy family, which was lately hopeful, and flourishing, a peaceful tabernacle, now broken up and scattered? Thy posterity, from which thou raisedst up to thyself great expectations of comfort in old age, cut off? So that thou art now like neither to have a name, or memorial left thee in the earth.

Dost thou sit alone, and mourn to think whitherto thy hopes and comforts are now come?

Dost thou read over those words of Job, chap. xxix. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and comment upon them with many tears; "O that I were as "in months past, as in the day when God preserved me! when his "candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked "through darkness! as I was in the days of my youth, when the "secret of God was upon my tabernacle, when the Almighty was "yet with me, when my children were about me."

Yet let the covenant God hath made with thee, comfort thee in this thy desolate condition.

You know what domestic troubles holy David met with in a sad succession, not only from the death of children, but, which was much worse, from the wicked lives of his children. There was incest, murder, and rebellion in his family; a far sorer trial than death in their infancy could have been; And yet see how sweetly he relieves himself from the covenant of grace, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although "my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an ever-"lasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for this is all my "salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

I know this place principally refers to Christ, who was to spring out of David's family, according to God's covenant made with him in that behalf; and yet I doubt not but it hath another, though less principal aspect upon his own family, over all the afflictions and troubles whereof the covenant of God with him did abundantly comfort him.

And as it comforted him, although his house did not increase, and

those that were left were not such as he desired; so it may abundantly comfort you also, whatever troubles, or deaths, are upon your families, who have an interest in the covenant. For,

First, If you are God's covenant people, though he may afflict, yet he will never forget you, Psalm iii. 5. he is ever mindful of his covenant: You are as much upon his heart in your deepest afflictions, as in the greatest flourish of your prosperity.

You find it hard to forget your child, though it be now turned to a heap of corruption, and loathsome rottenness; O how doth your mind run upon it night and day! your thoughts tire not upon that object: Why surely it is much more easy for you to forget your dear child, whilst living, and most endearing, (much more when dead and undesirable) than it is for your God to forget you. Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not "have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, "yet will not I forget thee."

Can a woman, the more affectionate sex, *forget her sucking child*, her own child, and not a nursing child? Her own child, whilst it hangs on the breast, and, together with the milk from the breast, draws love from its mother's heart; can such a thing as this be in nature? possibly it may, for creature-love is fickle, and variable; But, *I will not forget thee;* it is an everlasting covenant.

Secondly, As he will never forget you in your troubles, so he will order all your troubles for your good: It is *a well-ordered covenant*, or a covenant orderly disposed; so that every thing shall work together for your good.

The covenant so orders all your trials, ranks and disposes your various troubles so, as that they shall, in their orders and places, sweetly co-operate, and join their united influences to make you happy.

Possibly you cannot see how the present affliction should be for your good; you are ready to say, with Jacob, Gen. xlii. 36. "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin "away; all these things are against me." But could you once see how sweetly, and orderly all these afflictions work under the blessing and influence of the covenant, to your eternal good, you would not only be quiet, but thankful for that which now so much afflicts and troubles you.

Thirdly, This covenant is not only well ordered in all things, but *sure:* the mercies contained in it are called, "the sure mercies of "David," Isa. lv. 3. Now how sweet, how seasonable a support doth this consideration give to God's afflicted under the rod! you lately made yourselves *sure* of that creature-comfort which hath forsaken you. It may be, you said of your child, which is now gone, as Lamech said of his son Noah, Gen. 5. 29. "This same shall com-"fort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands." Meaning, that his son should not only comfort them, by assisting them in the

work of their hands, but also, in enjoying the fruit of their toil and pains for him.

Probably such thoughts you have had, and raised up to yourselves great expectations of comfort in your old age from it; but now you see you built upon the sand, and where were you now, if you had not a firmer bottom to build upon? But blessed be God, the covenant-mercies are more sure, and solid! God, Christ, and heaven, never start or fade, as these things do.

The sweetest creature-enjoyments you ever had or have in this world, cannot say to you, as your God doth, "I will never leave "thee, nor forsake thee." You must part with your dear husbands, how well soever you love them; you must bid adieu to the wife of your bosom, how nearly soever your affections be linked, and heart delighted in her. Your children and you must be separated, though they are to you as your own soul.

But though these vanish away, blessed be God there is something that abides. "Though all flesh be as grass, and the goodliness of it "as the flower of the grass, though the grass withereth, and the "flower thereof fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth "upon it; yet the word of our God shall stand for ever," Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8. There is so much of support contained in this one consideration, that could but your faith fix here, to realize and apply it, I might lay down my pen at this period, and say, the work is done, there needs no more.

Consideration 9. *The hope of the resurrection should powerfully restrain all excesses of sorrow in those that do profess it.*

Let them only mourn without measure, who mourn without hope. The husbandman doth not mourn when he casts his seed-corn into the earth, because he sows in hope; commits it to the ground with an expectation to receive it again with improvement. Why thus stands the case here, and just so the apostle states it, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning "them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which "have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, "even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Q. d. Look not upon the dead as a lost generation; think not that death hath annihilated, and utterly destroyed them: O no, they are not dead, but only asleep; and if they sleep, they shall awake again. You do not use to make outcries and lamentations for your children, and friends, when you find them asleep upon their beds. Why, death is but a longer sleep, out of which they shall as surely awake, as ever they did in the morning in this world.

I have often wondered at that golden sentence in Seneca *, "My "thoughts of the dead (saith he) are not as others are; I have fair "and pleasant apprehensions of them; for I enjoyed them as one

* *Habui enim illos tanquam amissurus, amisi tanquam habeam.* Seneca, Ep. 63.

" that reckoned I must part with them; and I part with them as " one that makes account to have them."

He speaks, no doubt, of that enjoyment of them, which his pleasant contemplations of their virtuous actions could give him; for he was wholly unacquainted with the comfortable, and heart-supporting doctrine of the resurrection. Had he known the advantages which result thence, at what a rate may we think he would have spoken of the dead, and of their state; But this you profess to believe, and yet sink at a strange rate. O suffer not Gentilism to outvie Christianity; let not Pagans challenge the greatest Believers, to out-do them in a quiet, and cheerful behaviour under afflictions.

I beseech thee, reader, if thy deceased friend have left thee any solid ground of hope that he died interested in Christ, and the covenant; that thou wilt distinctly ponder these admirable supports which the doctrine of the resurrection affords.

First, That the same body which was so pleasant a spectacle to thee shall be restored again; yea, the same *numerically*, as well as the same *specifically*; so that it shall not only be *what* it was, but the *who* it was. " These eyes shall behold him, and not another," Job xix. 27. The very same body you laid, or are now about to lay in the grave, shall be restored again: Thou shalt find thine own husband, wife, or child, or friend again: I say the self-same, and not another.

Secondly, And farther, this is supporting, that as you shall see the same person that was so dear to you; so you shall know them to be the same that were once endeared to you on earth in so near a tie of relation.

Indeed you shall know them no more in any carnal relation, death dissolved that bond: But you shall know them to be such as once were your dear relations in this world, and be able to single them out among that great multitude, and say, this was my father, mother, husband wife, or child; this was the person for whom I wept and made supplication, who was an instrument of good to me, or to whose salvation God then made me instrumental.

For we may allow, in that state, all that knowledge which is *cumulative* and *perfective*, whatsoever may enlarge and heighten our felicity and satisfaction, as this must needs be allowed to do. Luther's judgment in this point, * being asked by his friends at supper the evening before he died, replies thus, *What* (saith he) *befel* Adam? He never saw Eve, but was in a deep sleep when God formed her; yet when he awaked and saw her, he asked not what she was, nor whence she came? But saith, she was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. Now, how knew he that? He being full of the Holy Ghost, and endued with the knowledge of God, spake thus: after the same

* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther.

manner we also shall be in the other life renewed by Christ, and shall know our parents, our wives, and children.

And this among other things, was that with which † Augustine comforted the lady Italica, after the death of her dear husband, telling her that she should know him in the world to come among the glorified saints. Yea, and a greater than either of these, I mean Paul, comforted himself, that the Thessalonians, whom he had converted to Christ, should be "his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the presence "of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming," 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. which must needs imply his distinct knowledge of them in that day, which must be many hundred years after death hath separated them from each other. Whether this knowledge shall be by the glorified eyes discerning any lineaments or property of individuation remaining upon the glorified bodies of our relations; or whether it shall be by immediate revelation, as Adam knew his wife, or as Peter, James, and John knew Moses and Elias in the mount; as it is difficult to determine, so it is needless to puzzle ourselves about it.

It is the concurrent judgment of sound divines, and it wants not countenance from scripture and reason, that such a knowledge of them shall be in heaven; and then the sadness of this parting will be abundantly recompensed by the joy of that meeting. Especially considering.

Thirdly, That at our next meeting, they shall be unspeakably more desirable, sweet, and excellent, than ever they were in this world. They had a desirableness in them here, but they were not altogether lovely, and, in every respect, desirable; they had their infirmities, both natural and moral; but all these are removed in heaven, and for ever done away: No natural infirmities hang about glorified bodies, or sinful ones upon perfected spirits of the just. O what lovely creatures will they appear to you then, when that which is now sown in dishonour, shall be raised in honour! 1 Cor. xv. 43. And then, to crown all,

Fourthly, You shall have an everlasting enjoyment of them in heaven, never to part again. The children of the resurrection can die no more, Luke xx. 36. you shall kiss their pale lips and cold cheeks no more; you shall never fear another parting pull, but be together with the Lord for ever, 1 Thes. iv. 14. And this the apostle thought an effectual cordial in this case when he exhorted the Thessalonians to "comfort one another with these words."

Consid. 10. *The present felicity into which all that die in Christ are presently admitted, should abundantly comfort Christians over the death of such as either carried a lively hope out of the world with them, or have left good grounds of such an hope behind them.*

Such there are, that carried a lively hope to heaven with them, who could evidence to themselves and friends, their interest in Christ

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* Aug. Ep. 6.

and in the covenant. Yea, though they had died in silence, yet their conversations would speak for them, and the tenor of their lives leave no ground of doubting touching their death. Others dying in their infancy and youth, though they carried not such an actual hope with them, yet they have left good grounds of hope behind them.

Parents, now ponder these grounds; you have prayed for them, you have many times wrestled with the Lord on their behalf; you have taken hold of God's covenant for them, as well as for yourselves, and dedicated them to the Lord; and they have not, by any actions of theirs, destroyed those grounds of your hope, but that you may, with much probability, conclude they are with God.

Why, if the case be so, what abundant reason have you to be quiet, and well satisfied with what God hath done? Can they be better than where they are? Had you better provisions and entertainment for them here than their heavenly Father hath above?

There is no Christian parent in the world, but would rejoice to see his child out-strip and get before him in grace, that he may be more eminent in parts and services than ever he was: And what reason can be given, why we should not as much rejoice to see our children get before us in glory, as in grace? They are gotten to heaven a few years before you, and is that matter of mourning? Would not your child (if he were not ignorant of you) say, as Christ did to his friends, a little before his death, when he saw them cast down at the thoughts of parting, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would re-"joice, because I go to the Father." q. d. Do not value your own sensible comfort, from my bodily presence with you, before my glory and advancement in heaven. Is this love to me? Or is it not rather self-love?

So would your departed friend say to you: 'You have professed 'much love all along to me, my happiness seemed to be very dear to 'you. How comes it to pass, then, that you mourn so exceedingly 'now? This is rather the effect of a fond and fleshly, than of a 'rational and spiritual love; if you loved me with a pure spiritual 'love ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father. It is infi-'nitely better for me to be here, than with you on earth, under sin 'and sorrow. Weep not for me, but for yourselves.'

Alas! though you want your friends company, he wants not yours; your care was to provide for this child, but Jesus Christ hath provided infinitely better for it than you could; you intended an estate, but he a kingdom for it; you thought upon such or such a match, but Christ hath forbid all others, and married your child to himself. Would you imagine an higher preferment for the fruit of your bodies?

A King from heaven hath sent for your friend, and do you grudge at the journey? O think, and think again, what an honour it is to you, that Christ hath taken them out of your bosom, and laid them

in his own; stript them out of those garments you provided, and cloathed them in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Let not your hearts be troubled, rather rejoice exceedingly, that God made you instruments to replenish heaven, and bring forth an heir for the kingdom of God.

Your child is now glorifying God, in an higher way than you can, and what though you have lost its bodily presence for a time; yet, I hope you do not reckon that to be your loss, which turns to God's greater glory.

When Jacob heard his Joseph was lord of Egypt, he rather wished himself with Joseph, than his Joseph with him in wants and straits; so should it be with you: You are yet rolling and tossing upon a tempestuous sea, but your friend is gone into the quiet harbour; desire rather to be there than that he were at sea with you again.

Consideration 11. *Consider how vain a thing all your troubles and self-vexation is; it no way betters your case, nor eases your burden.*

As a bullock, by wrestling and sweating in the furrow, makes his yoke to be more heavy, and galls his neck, and spends his strength the sooner, and no ways helps himself by that: Why thus stands the case with thee; if thou be as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, What Christ saith of *caring*, we may say of *grieving*, (Matth. vi. 27.) "Which of you, by taking thought can add one cubit to his "stature?"

Cares may break our sleep, yea, break our hearts, but they cannot add to our stature, either in a natural, or in a civil notion: So our sorrowing may sooner break our hearts, than the yoke God hath laid on you.

Alas! what is all this but as the fluttering of a bird in the net, which, instead of freeing, doth but the more entangle itself. It was therefore a wise resolution of David in this very case, when the will of God was signified in the death of his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "But "now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back "again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Can I bring him back again? No; I can no more alter the purpose and work of God, than I can change the seasons of the year, or alter the course of the sun, moon and stars, or disturb the order of the day and night; which are all unalterably established by a firm constitution and ordinance of heaven.

As these seasons cannot be changed by man, so neither can this course and way of his providences be changed. Job xxiii. 13. "He "is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, "even that he doth." Indeed, while his pleasure and purpose are unknown to us, there is room for fasting and prayer, to prevent the thing we fear: But when the purpose of God is manifested in the issue, and the stroke is given, then it is the vainest thing in the world to fret and vex ourselves, as David's servants thought he would do, as soon as he shoul dhear the child was dead: But he was wiser than

so, his tears and cries to God before had the nature and use of means to prevent the affliction: but when it was come, and could not be prevented, then they were of no use, to no purpose in the world: "Wherefore should I fast?" *Q. d.* To what end, use, or purpose will it be now.

Well then, cast not away your strength and spirits to no advantage; reserve them for future exercises and trials: Time may come, that you may need all the strength you have, and much more, to support greater burdens than this.

Consideration 12. *The Lord is able to restore all your lost comforts in relations double to you, if you meekly submit to him, and patiently wait upon him under the rod.*

When Esau had lost his blessing, he said, "Hast thou but one "blessing, my father?" Gen. xxvii. 38. But your Father hath more blessings for you than one: his name is the "Father of mer-"cies," 2 Cor. xiii. 11. He can beget and create as many mercies for you as he pleaseth; relations, and the comforts of them, are at his command.

It is but a few months, or years past, and these comforts, whose loss you now lament were not in being; nor did you know whence they should arise to you, yet the Lord gave the word, and commanded them for you; and, if he please, he can make the death of these but like a scythe to the meadow that is mown down, or a razor to the head that is shaved bare; which, though it lay you under the present trouble and reproach of barrenness, yet doth but make way for a double increase, a second spring with advantage.

So that even as it was with the captive church, in respect of her special children, in the day of her captivity and reproach, the Lord made up all with advantage to her, even to her own astonishment. Isa. xlii. 20. "The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast "lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too strait "for me; Give place to me that I may dwell."

Thus may he deal with you, as to your natural children, and relations; so that what the man of God said to Amaziah, 1 Chron. xxv. 9. may be applied to the case in hand. "Amaziah said to the "man of God, but what shall we do for the hundred talents? And "the man of God answered, the Lord is able to give thee much "more than this."

O say not, What shall I do for friends and relations? Death hath robbed me of all comfort in them. Why the Lord is able to give you much more. But then, as ever you expect to see your future blessings multiplied, look to it, and be careful that you neither dishonour God, nor grieve him, by your unsubmissive, and impatient carriage, under the present rod.

God took away all Job's children, and that at one stroke, and the stroke immediate and extraordinary, and that when they were grown up, and planted (at least some of them) in distinct families; yea,

whilst they were endearing each other by mutual expressions of affection. This must be yielded to be an extraordinary trial, yet he meekly receives, and patiently bears it from the hand of the Lord.

You have heard of the patience of Job, (saith the apostle James v. 11.) "and seen the end of the Lord." Not only the gracious end, or intention of the Lord in all his afflictions, but the happy end and issue the Lord gave to all his afflictions, of which you have the account, Job xlii. 10. "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had "before." The number of his children was not double to what he had, as all his other comforts were: But though the Lord only restored the same number to him again that he took away, yet it is likely the comfort he had in these latter children was double to what he had in the former. There is nothing lost by waiting patiently, and submitting willingly to the Lord's dispose.

It is as easy with the Lord to revive, as it is to remove your comforts in relations. There is a sweet expression to this purpose, in Psal. lxxxi. 28. "For thou, Lord, will light my candle, the Lord "my God will enlighten my darkness."

Every comfortable enjoyment, whether it be in relations, estate, health, or friends, is a candle lighted by providence for our comforts in this world, and they are but candles, which will not always last; and those that last longest will be consumed and wasted at last; but oftentimes it falls out with them as with candles, they are blown out before they are half consumed; yea, almost as soon as lighted up, and then we are in darkness for the present.

It is a dark hour with us, when these comforts are put out; but David's faith did, and ours may comfort us with this, that he that blew out the candle, can light up another: "Thou, Lord, shalt light my "candle, the Lord my God shall enlighten my darkness." That is, the Lord will renew my comforts, alter the present sad state I am in, and chase away that trouble and darkness which at present lies upon me: Only beware of offending him, at whose beck your lights and comforts come and go. Michal displeased the Lord, and therefore had no child unto the day of her death, 2 Sam. vi. 23.

Hannah waited humbly upon the Lord for the blessing of children, and the Lord remembered her; he enlightened her condition with that comfort, when she was as a lamp despised. There is no comfort you have lost but God can restore it, yea, double it in kind, if he sees it convenient for you. And if not, then,

Consideration 13. *Consider, though he should deny you any more comforts of that kind, yet he hath far better to bestow upon you, such as these deserve not to be named with.*

You have an excellent scripture to that purpose, in Isa. lvi. 4, 5. "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths; "and chuse the things that please me, and take hold of my cove- "nant; even to them will I give in my house, and within my walls, "a place, and a name better than of sons and daughters; I will give "them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

Men's names are to be continued in their issue, in their male issue especially, and consequently to fail in such as wanted issue, Num. xvii. 4. and a numerous issue is deemed no small honour, Psal. cxxvii. 4, 5. God therefore promised here to supply, and make good the want of issue, and whatsoever, either honour here, or memorial hereafter, might from it have accrued to them, by bestowing upon them matter of far greater honour, and more durable; a name better, or before the names of sons or daughters.

See English Annotations on the place.

It is a greater honour to be the child of God, than to have the greatest honour, or comfort, that ever children afforded their parents in this world.

Poor heart, thou art now dejected by this affliction that lies upon thee, as if all joy and comfort were now cut off from thee in this world.

A cloud dwells upon all other comforts, this affliction hath so imbittered thy soul, that thou tastest no more in any other earthly comforts, than in the white of an egg. O that thou didst but consider the consolations that are with God for such as answer his ends in affliction, and patiently wait on him for their comfort! he hath comforts for you far transcending the joy of children.

This some hath found when their children have been cut off from them, and that in so eminent a degree, that they have little valued their comfort in children, in comparison with this comfort.

I will therefore set down a pregnant instance of the point in hand, as I find it recorded by the grave and worthy author of that excellent book intitled, *The fulfilling of the scripture.*

Another notable instance of grace, with a very remarkable passage in his condition, I shall here mention. 'One Patrick Mackewrath, 'who lived in the west parts of Scotland, whose heart, in a remark-'able way the Lord touched, and after his conversion (as he shewed 'to many Christian friends) was in such a frame, so affected with a 'new world, wherein he was entered, the discoveries of God, and of 'a life to come; that for some months together he did seldom sleep, 'but was still taken up in wondering. His life was very remarkable 'for tenderness, and near converse with God in his walk; and, which 'was worthy to be noted, one day, after a sharp trial, having his only 'son suddenly taken away by death, he retired alone for several 'hours, and when he came forth did look so cheerfully, that to those 'who asked him the reason thereof, and wondered at the same in 'such a time; he told them, He had got that in his retirement with 'the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content 'to lose a son every day.'

O what a sweet exchange had he made! Surely he had gold for brass, a pearl for a pebble, a treasure for a trifle; for so great, yea, and far greater is the disproportion betwixt the sweet light of God's countenance, and the faint, dim light of the best creature-enjoyment.

Would it please the Lord to make this sun arise and shine upon you, now when the stars that shined with a dim and borrowed light are gone down, you would see such gain by the exchange as would quickly make you cast in your votes with him we now mentioned, and say, Lord, let every day be such as this funeral day; let all my hours be as this, so that I may see and taste what I now do. How gladly would I part with the dearest and nearest creature-comforts I own in this world. The gracious and tender Lord hath his divine cordials reserved on purpose for such sad hours; these are sometimes given before some sharp trial, to prepare for it, and sometimes after, to support under it.

I have often heard it from the mouth, and found it in the *diary* of a sweet Christian now with God, that a little before the Lord removed her dear husband by death, there was such an abundant outlet of the love of God unto her soul for several days and nights following, that when the Lord took away her husband by death, though he was a gracious and sweet tempered (and by her most tenderly beloved) husband, she was scarce sensible of the stroke, but carried quite above all earthly things, their comforts, and their troubles: so that she had almost lost the thoughts of her dear husband in God. And had not the Lord taken that course with her, she concluded that blow had not been possible to be borne by her, she must have sunk without such a preparative.

A husband, a wife, a child, are great, very great things, as they stand by other creatures; but surely they will seem little things, and next to nothing, when the Lord shall set himself by them before the soul.

And how know you, but God hath bidden these earthly comforts stand aside this day, to make way for heavenly ones? It may be, God is coming to communicate himself more sweetly, more sensibly than ever to your souls; and these are the providences which must cast up, and prepare the way of the Lord. Possibly God's meaning in their death is but this: child, stand aside, thou art in my way, and fillest my place in thy parent's heart.

Consideration 14. *Be careful you exceed not in your grief for the loss of earthly things, considering that Satan takes the advantage of all extremes.*

You cannot touch any extreme, but you will be touched by that enemy, whose greatest advantages lie in assaulting you here.

Satan is called, *The ruler of the darkness of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. i. e. his kingdom is supported by darkness. Now, there is a two-fold darkness, which gives Satan great advantage; the darkness of the *mind*, viz. ignorance; and the darkness of the *condition*, viz. trouble and affliction. Of the former the apostle speaks chiefly in that text; but the latter also is by him often improved to carry on his designs upon us. When it is a dark hour of trouble with us, then is his fittest season to tempt.

That cowardly spirit falls upon the people of God when they are down and low in spirit as well as state. Satan would never have de-

sired that the hand of God should have been stretched out upon Job's person, estate, and children, but that he promised himself a notable advantage therein, to poison his spirit with vile thoughts of God. "Do this (saith he) and he will curse thee to thy face."

What the Psalmist observes of *natural*, is as true of *metaphorical* darkness, Psal. civ. 20. "Thou makest darkness, and it is night, "wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth, the young lions "roar after their prey."

When it is dark night with men, it is noon-day with Satan; i. e. our suffering-time is his busiest working-time; many a dismal suggestion he then plants, and grafts upon your affliction, which are much more dangerous to us than the affliction itself.

Sometimes he injects *desponding* thoughts into the afflicted soul; "Then, said I, I am cut off from before thine eyes," Psal. xxxi. 22. and Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is perished from the Lord, remem- "bering my affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall."

Sometimes he suggests *hard* thoughts of God, Ruth i. 20. "The "Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me." Yea, that he hath dealt more severely with us than any other, Lam. i. 12. "See and be- "hold, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done "unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his "fierce anger."

And sometimes murmuring and repining thoughts against the Lord; the soul is displeased at the hand of God upon it. Jonah was angry at the hand of God, and said, "I do well to be angry, even "unto death," Jon. iv. 9. What dismal thoughts are these? and how much more afflictive to a gracious soul, than the loss of any outward enjoyment in this world.

And sometimes very *irreligious* and *atheistical* thoughts, as if there were no privilege to be had by religion, and all our pains, zeal, and care about duty, were little better than lost labour, Psal. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my "hands in innocency; for all the day long I have been plagued, "and chastened every morning."

By these things Satan gets no small advantage upon the afflicted Christian; for albeit these thoughts are his burden, and God will not impute them to the condemnation of his people; yet they rob the soul of peace, and hinder it from duty, and make it act uncomely under affliction, to the stumbling and hardening of others in their sin: beware therefore, lest by your excess of sorrow ye give place to the devil; we are not ignorant of his devices.

Consider. 15. *Give no way to excessive sorrows upon the account of affliction, if ye have any regard to the honour of God and religion, which will hereby be exposed to reproach.*

If you slight your own honour, do not slight the honour of God and religion too; take heed how you carry it in a day of trouble; many

eyes are upon you. It is a true observation that a late worthy * author hath made upon this case: 'What will the Atheist, and what 'will the profane scoffer say when they shall see this? So sottish 'and malicious they are, that if they do but see you in affliction, 'they are straightway scornfully demanding, Where is your God?

'But what would they say, if they should hear you yourselves un-'believingly cry out, Where is our God? Will they not be ready 'to cry, this is the religion they make such boast of, which you see 'how little it does for them in a day of extremity: they talk of pro-'mises, rich and precious promises; but where are they now? Or 'to what purpose do they serve? They said they had a treasure in 'heaven; what ails them to mourn so then if their riches are there?'

O beware what you do before the world; they have eyes to see what you can do, as well as ears to hear what you can say: and as long as your carriage under trouble is so much like their own, they will never think your principles are better than theirs. Carnal worldlings will be drawn to think, that whatever fine talk you might have about God and heaven, your hearts were most upon the same things that theirs were, since your grief for their removal is as great as theirs.

They know by experience what a stay it is to the heart, to have an able, faithful friend to depend upon, or to have hopes of a great estate shortly to fall to them; and they will never be persuaded you have any such ground of comfort if they see you as much cast down as they that pretend to no such matter.

By this means the precepts of Christ to constancy and contentment in all estates, will come to be looked upon (like those of the *stoics*) only as *magnifica verba*, brave words; but such as are impossible to be practised; and the whole of the gospel will be taken for an airy notion, since they that profess greatest regard to it, are no more helped thereby.

O what a shame is it that religion should, in this case, make no more difference betwixt man and man! wherefore shew to the world (whatever their common censures are) that it is not so much your care to differ from them in some opinions, and a little strictness, as in humility, meekness, contempt of the world, and heavenly-mindedness; and now let these graces display themselves by your cheerful, patient deportment under all your grievances.

Wherefore hath God planted those excellent graces in your souls? but that he might be glorified, and you benefited by the exercises of them in tribulation: should these be suppressed and hid, and nothing but the pride, passion, and unmortified earthliness of your hearts set on work, and discovered in time of trouble, what a slur, what a wound will you give to the glorious name which is called upon by you? And then if your hearts be truly gracious, that will pierce you deeper than ever your affliction which occasioned it did.

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* *M. M. his appendix to Solomon's prescription*, p. 1, 2.

I beseech you, therefore, be tender of the name of God, if you will not be so of your own peace and comfort.

Consider. 16. *Be quiet, and hold your peace, you little know how many mercies lie in the womb of this affliction.*

Great are the benefits of a sharp, rousing affliction to the people of God at sometimes, and all might have them at all times, were they more careful to improve them. Holy David thankfully acknowledgeth, Psal. cxix. 71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

And surely there is as much good in them for you, as for him; if the Lord sanctify them to such ends and uses as his were sanctified unto.

Such a smarting rod as this came not before there was need enough of it, and possibly you saw the need of some awakening providence yourselves; but if not, the Lord did: he took not up the rod to smite you, till his faithfulness and tender love to your souls called upon him to correct you.

You now sit pensive under the rod, sadly lamenting and deploring the loss of some earthly comfort; your heart is surcharged with sorrow, your eyes run down upon every mention and remembrance of your dear friend: why, if there were no more, this alone may discover the need you had of this rod; for doth not all this sorrow at parting plainly speak how much your heart was set upon, how fast your heart was glewed to this earthly comfort?

Now you see that your affections were sunk many degrees deeper into the creature, than you are aware of: and what should God do in this case by you? Should he suffer you to cleave to the creature more and more? Should he permit it to purloin, and exhaust your love and delight, and steal away your heart from himself? This he could not do, and love you. The more impatient you are under this affliction, the more need you had of it.

And what if by this stroke the Lord will awaken your drowsy soul, and recover you out of that pleasant, but dangerous spiritual slumber you were fallen into, whilst you had pillowed your head upon this pleasant, sensible creature-enjoyment? Is not this really better for you than if he should say, Sleep on: he is joined to idols, let him alone; he is departing from me, the fountain, to a broken cistern; let him go.

Yea, what if by this stroke upon one of the pleasantest things you had in this world, God will discover to you, more sensibly and effectually than ever, the vanity both of that and all earthly comforts, so as that you shall from henceforth never let forth your heart, your hope, your love, and delight to any of them, as you did before? You could talk before of the creature's vanity, but I question whether ever you had so clear and convincing a sight of its vanity as you have this day: and is not this a considerable mercy in your eyes?

Now, if ever God is weaning you from all fond opinions, and vain expectations from this world; by this your *judgment* of the creature

is *rectified*, and your *affections* to all other enjoyments on earth *moderated:* and is this nothing? O doubtless it is a greater mercy to you, than to have your friend alive again.

And what if by this rod your wandering, gadding heart shall be whipped home to God? your neglected duties revived? your decayed communion with God restored? a spiritual, heavenly frame of heart recovered? What will you say then?

Surely you will bless that merciful hand which removed the obstructions, and adore the Divine wisdom, and goodness, that by such a device as this recovered you to himself. Now you can pray more constantly, more spiritually, more affectionately than before. O blessed rod, which buds and blossoms with such fruits as these! Let this be written among your best mercies, for you shall have cause to adore and bless God eternally for this beneficial affliction.

Consider. 17. *Suffer not yourselves to be transported by impatience, and swallowed up of grief, because God hath exercised you under a smart rod; for, as smarting as it is, it is comparatively a gentle stroke to what others, as good as yourselves, have felt.*

Your dear relation is dead; be it so, here is but a single death before you, but others have seen many deaths contrived into one upon their relations, to which yours is nothing.

The fulfilling of the Scriptures.

Zedekiah saw his children murdered before his eyes, and then had those eyes (alas two late) put out. The worthy author of that excellent book before-mentioned, tells us of a choice and godly gentlewoman in the north of Ireland, who when the rebellion broke out there, fled with three children, one of them upon the breast; they had not gone far before they were stripped naked by the Irish, who, to their admiration, spared their lives, (it is like, concluding that cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards going on at the foot of a river which runs to Lochneach, others met them, and would have cast them into the river; but this godly woman, not dismayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as she lay naked on the frozen ground, got resolution not to go on her own feet, to so unjust a death, upon which having called her, and she refusing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way, to be cast in with her little ones, and company.

But she then turned, and on her knees says, You should, I am sure, be Christians, and men I see you are; in taking away our miserable lives, you do us a pleasure; but know, that as we never wronged you nor yours, you must remember to die also yourselves, and one day give an account of this cruelty, to the judge of heaven and earth. Hereupon they resolved not to murder them with their own hands, but turned them all naked upon a small island in the river, without any provision, there to perish.

The next day, the two boys having crept aside, found the hide of a beast which had been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother cast over them lying upon the snow. The next day a little boat

goes by, unto whom she calls for God's sake to take them in, but they being Irish, refused; she desired a little bread, but they said they had none; then she begs a coal of fire, which she obtained; and thus, with some fallen chips, made a little fire, and the children taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather; but without an extraordinary Divine support, what could this do?

Thus they lived ten days, without any visible means of help, having no bread, but ice and snow, nor drink except water. The two boys being near starved, she pressed them to go out of her sight, not being able to see their death; yet God delivered them as miraculously at last, as he had supported them all that while.

But judge whether a natural death, in an ordinary way be comparable to such a trial as this; and yet thus the Lord did by this choice and eminently gracious woman.

And Mr. Wall, in his *None-but-Christ*, relates as sad a passage of a poor family in Germany, who were driven unto that extremity in the famine, that at last the parents made a motion one to the other to sell one of the children for bread to sustain themselves, and the rest; but when they came to consider which child it should be, their hearts so relented, and yearned upon every one, that they resolved rather all to die together. Yea, we read in Lam. iv. 10. "The hands of "the pitiful women have sodden their own children."

But why speak I of these extremities? How many parents, yea, some godly ones too, have lived to see their children dying in prophaneness, and some by the hand of justice, lamenting their rebellions with a rope about their necks.

Ah! reader, little dost thou know what stings there are in the afflictions of others! surely you have no reason to think the Lord hath dealt more bitterly with you than any. It is a gentle stroke, a merciful dispensation, if you compare it with what others have felt.

Consideration 18. *If God be your God, you have really lost nothing by the removal of any creature-comfort.*

God is the fountain of all true comfort; creatures, the very best and sweetest, are but cisterns to receive, and convey to us what comfort God is pleased to communicate to them; and if the cistern be broken, or the pipe cut off, so that no more comfort can be conveyed to us that way, he hath other ways and mediums to do it by, which we think not of; and if he please he can convey his comforts to his people without any of them: And if he do it more immediately, we shall be no losers by that; for no comforts in the world are so delectable, and ravishingly sweet, as those that flow immediately from the fountain.

And it is the sensuality of our hearts that causes us to affect them so inordinately, and grieve for the loss of them so immoderately, as if we had not enough in God, without these creature supplements.

Is the fulness of the fountain yours? and yet do you cast down yourselves, because the broken cistern is removed; The best creatures are no better, Jer. ii. 13. Cisterns have nothing but what they receive, and broken ones cannot hold what is put into them. Why then do you mourn, as if your life were bound up in the creature? You have as free an access to the fountain as you had before. It is the advice of an Heathen, (and let them take the comfort of it) to repair, by a new earthly comfort, what we have lost in the former.

"Thou hast carried forth him whom thou lovedst, (saith * Seneca) "seek one whom thou mayest love in his stead: It is better to repair "than to bemoan thy loss."

But if God never repair your loss in things of the same kind, you know he can abundantly repair it himself.

Ah! Christian, is not one kiss of his mouth, one glimpse of his countenance, one seal of his Spirit, a more sweet and substantial comfort, than the sweetest relation in this world can afford you? If the stream fail, repair to the fountain, there is enough still; God is where he was, and what he was, though the creature be not.

Consideration 19. *Though you may want a little comfort in your life, yet surely it may be recompensed to you by a more easy death.*

The removal of your friends before you may turn to your great advantage, when your hour is come that you must follow them. O how have many good souls been clogged and ensnared in their dying hour, by the loves, cares, and fears they have had about those they must leave behind them in a sinful, evil world!

Your love to them might have proved a snare to you, and caused you to hang back, as loth to go hence; for these are the things that make men loth to die. And thus it might have been with you, except God had removed them before-hand, or should give you in that day such sights of heaven, and tastes of divine love, as should master and mortify all your earthly affections to these things.

I knew a gracious person, (now in heaven) who, for many weeks in her last sickness, complained that she found it hard to part with a dear relation, and that there was nothing proved a greater clog to her soul than this: It is much more easy to think of going to our friends, who are in heaven before us, than of parting with them, and leaving our desirable and dear ones behind us.

And who knows what cares and distracting thoughts you may then be pestered and distracted with upon their account? What shall become of these when I am gone? I am now to leave them, God knows to what wants, miseries, temptations, and afflictions in the midst of a deceitful, defiling, dangerous world.

I know it is our duty to leave our fatherless children, and friendless relations with God; to trust them with him that gave them to us:

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* *Quem amabas extulisti, quære quem ames: Sattas est amicum reparare quam flere.*—Senec. Epist. p. 637.

And some have been enabled cheerfully to do so when they were parting from them. * Luther could say, "Lord, thou hast given "me a wife and children, I have little to leave them; nourish, "teach, and keep them; O thou Father of the fatherless, and "Judge of the widow." But every Christian hath not a Luther's faith; some find it a hard thing to disentangle their affections at such a time: But now, if God has sent all yours before you, you have so much the less to do; death may be easier to you than others.

Consideration 20. *But if nothing that hath been yet said will stick with you, then, lastly, remember that you are near that state, and place which admits no sorrows, nor sad reflections, upon any such accounts as these.*

Yet a little while, and you shall not miss them, you shall not need them, but you shall live as the angels of God: We now live partly by faith, partly by sense, partly upon God, and partly upon the creature; our state is mixed, therefore our comforts are so too. But when God shall be all in all, and we shall be as the angels of God in the way and manner of our living; how much will the case be altered with us then, from what it is now?

Angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither shall the children of the resurrection; when the days of our sinning are ended, the days of our mourning shall be so too. No graves were opened till sin entered, and no more shall be opened when sin is excluded.

Our glorified relations shall live with us for ever; they shall complain no more, die no more; yea, this is the happiness of that state to which you are passing on, that your souls being in the nearest conjunction with God, the fountain of joy, you shall have no concernment out of him. You shall not be put upon these exercises of patience, nor subjected to such sorrows as you now feel, any more. It is but a little while, and the end of all these things will come. O therefore bear up, as persons that expect such a day of jubilee at hand.

And thus I have finished the second general head of this discourse, which is a dissuasive from the sin of immoderate sorrow.

3. I now proceed to the third thing proposed, namely, to remove the pleas and excuses for this immoderate grief. It is natural to men, yea, to good men, to justify their excesses, or at least to extenuate them, by pleading for their passions, as if they wanted not cause, and reason enough to excuse them. If these be fully answered, and the soul once convinced, and left without apology for its sin, it is then in a fair way for its cure, which is the last thing designed in this treatise.

My present business, therefore is, to satisfy those objections, and answer those reasons which are commonly pleaded in this case, to justify our excessive grief for lost relations. And though I shall carry it in that line of relation to which the text directs, yet it is equally applicable to all others.

* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther.

Plea 1. You press me by many great considerations to meekness and quiet submission under this heavy stroke of God; but you little know what stings my soul feels now in it.

The child was a child of many prayers, it was a Samuel begged of the Lord, and I concluded when I had it, that it brought with it the returns and answers of many prayers. But now I see it was nothing less; God had no regard to my prayer about it, nor was it given me in that special way of mercy, as I imagined it to be: My child is not only dead, but my prayers in the same day shut out and denied.

Answer 1. That you prayed for your children before you had them was your duty; and if you prayed not for them submissively, referring it to the pleasure of God to give, or deny them, to continue or remove them, as should seem good to him, that was your sin: You ought not to limit the Holy one of Israel, nor prescribe to him; or capitulate with him, for what term you shall enjoy your outward comforts: If you did so, it was your evil, and God hath justly rebuked it by this stroke. If you did pray conditionally, and submissively referring both the mercy asked and continuance of it to the will of God, as you ought to do; then there is nothing in the death of your child that crosses the true scope and intent in your prayer.

Answer 2. Your prayers may be answered, though the thing prayed for be with-held, yea, or though it should be given for a little while, and snatched away from you again. There are four ways of God's answering prayers, by giving the thing prayed for presently, Dan. ix. 23. or by suspending the answer for a time, and giving it afterwards, Luke xviii. 7. or by with-holding from you that mercy which you ask, and giving you a much better mercy in the room of it, Deut. iii. 24. compared with Deut. xxxiv. 4, 5. Or, lastly, by giving you patience to bear the loss, or want of it, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Now, if the Lord have taken away your child, or friend, and in lieu thereof given you a meek, quiet, submissive heart to his will, you need not say he hath shut out your cry.

Plea. 2 But I have lost a lovely, obliging, and most endearing child, one that was beautiful and sweet; it is a stony heart that would not dissolve into tears for the loss of one so desirable, so engaging as this was: Ah! it is no common loss.

Answer 1. The more lovely and engaging your relation was, the more excellent will your patience and contentment with the will of God in its death be: the more loveliness, the more self-denial, the more grace. Had it been a thousand times more endearingly sweet than it was, it was not too good to deny for God. If therefore obedience to the will of God do indeed master natural affections, and that you look upon patience and contentment as much more beautiful than the sweetest and most desirable enjoyment on earth, it may turn to you for a testimony of the truth and strength of grace: that you can, like Abraham, part with a child whom you so dearly love, in obedience to the will of your God, whom you love infinitely more.

Answer 2. The loveliness and beauty of our children and relations, though it must be acknowledged a good gift from the hand of God; yet it is but a common gift, and often times becomes a snare, and is, in its own nature, but a transitory, vanishing thing, and therefore no such great aggravation of the loss as is pretended.

I say, it is but a common gift; Eliab, Adonijah, and Absalom had as lovely presences as any in their generation. Yea, it is not only common to the wicked, with the godly, but to the brute animals, as well as men, and to most that excel in it, it becomes a temptation; the souls of some had been more beautiful and lovely, if their bodies had been less so. Besides, it is but a flower which nourishes in its mouth, and then fades. This therefore should not be reflected on as so great a circumstance to aggravate your trouble.

Answer 3. But if your relation sleep in Jesus, he will appear ten thousand times more lovely in the morning of the resurrection, than ever he was in the world. What is the exactest, purest beauty of mortals, to the incomparable beauty of the saints in the resurrection? "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of "their Father," Matth. xiii. 43. In this hope you part with them, therefore act suitably to your hopes.

Plea 3. Oh! but my child was nipped off by death in the very bud; I did but see, and love, and part: Had I enjoyed it longer, and had time to suck out the sweetness of such an enjoyment, I could have borne it easier; but its months or years with me were so few, that they only served to raise an expectation which was quickly, and therefore the more sadly disappointed.

Answer 1. Did your friend die young, or was the bond of any other relation almost dissolved as soon as made? Let not this seem so intolerable a load to you; for if you have ground to hope they died in Christ, then they lived long enough in this world*. It is truly said, he hath sailed long enough that hath won the harbour; he hath fought long enough that hath obtained the victory; he hath run long enough that hath touched the goal; and he hath lived long enough upon earth that hath won heaven, be his days here never so few.

Answer 2. The sooner your relation died, the less sin hath been committed, and the less sorrow felt: What can you see in this world but sin or sorrow? A quick passage through it to glory is a special privilege. Surely the world is not so desirable a place, that Christians should desire an hour's time longer in it for themselves, or theirs, than serves to fit them for a better.

Answer 3. And whereas you imagine the parting would have been easier if the enjoyment had been longer, it is a fond and groundless suspicion: The longer you had enjoyed them, the stronger would the endearments have been. A young and tender plant may be easily

* *Vide* Mr. Baxter's Epistle to the life of Mr. John Janeway.

drawn up by a single hand, but when it hath spread and fixed its root many years in the earth, it will require many a strong blow, and hard tug to root it up. Affections like those under-ground roots, are fixed and strengthened by nothing more than consuetude and long-possession; it is much easier parting now, than it would be hereafter, whatever you think. However, this should satisfy you, that God's time is the best time.

Plea 4. O but I have lost all in one, it is my only one, I have none left in its room to repair the breach, and make up the loss: If God had given me other children to take comfort in, the loss had not been so great; but to lose all at one stroke is insupportable.

Answer 1. Religion allows not unto Christians a liberty of expressing the death of their dear relations by so hard a word as the loss of them is; they are not lost but sent before you *: And it is a shameful thing for a Christian to be reproved for such an uncomely expression by a heathen; it is enough to make us blush to read what an heathen said in this case†, 'Never say thou hast lost any thing '(saith Epictetus) but that it is returned. Is thy son dead? He is 'only restored. Is thy inheritance taken from thee? It is also re-'turned.' And a while after he adds, Ει τουτο θεοις φιλον τουτο γενεσθω, i. e. 'Let every thing be as the gods would have it.'

Answer 2. It is no fit expression to say you have lost all in one, except that one be Christ; and he being once yours, can never be lost. Doubtless, your meaning is, you have lost all your comfort of that kind; and what though you have? Are there not multitudes of comforts yet remaining, of a higher kind, and more precious and durable nature? If you have no more of that sort, yet so long as you have better, what cause have you to rejoice!

Answer 3. You too much imitate the way of the world in this complaint; they know not how to repair the loss of one comfort but by another of the same nature, which must be put in its room to fill up the vacancy: But have you no other way to supply your loss? Have you not a God to fill the place of any creature that leaves you? Surely this would better become a man whose portion is in this life, than one that professes God is his all in all.

Plea 5. O but my only one is not only taken away, but there remains no expectation or probability of any more: I must now look upon myself as a dry tree, never to take comfort in children any more, which is a cutting thought.

Answer 1. Suppose what you say, that you have no hope nor expectation of another child remaining to you; yet if you have a hope of better things than children, you have no reason to be cast down: Bless God for higher and better hopes than these. In Isa. lvi. 4, 5. the Lord comforts them that have no expectations of sons or daughters with this; "That he will give unto them in his house, and with-

* *Non amittuntur sed præmittuntur.* † *Epict. Enchirid.* cap. 15.

" in his walls, a place and a name better than of sons and daughters; " even an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." There are better mercies, and higher hopes than these; though your hopes of children, or from children, should be cut off, yet if your eternal hopes are secure, and such as shall not make you ashamed, you should not be so cast down.

Answer 2. If God will not have your comforts to lie any more in children, then resolve to place them in himself, and you shall never find cause to complain of loss by such an exchange: You will find that in God which is not to be had in the creature; one hour's communion with him, shall give you that which the happiest parent never yet had from his children; you will exchange brass for gold, perishing vanity for solid and abiding excellency.

Plea 6. But the suddenness of the stroke is amazing, God gave little or no warning to prepare for this trial: Death executed its commission as soon as it opened it. My dear husband, wife, or child, was snatched unexpectedly out of my arms, by a surprizing stroke; and this makes my stroke heavier than my complaint.

Answer 1. That the death of your relation was so sudden and surprizing, was much your own fault, who ought to have lived in the daily sense of its vanity, and expectation of your separation from it; you knew it to be a dying comfort in its best estate, and it is no such wonderful thing to see that dead, which you knew before to be dying: Besides, you heard the changes ringing about you in other families; you frequently saw other parents, husbands, and wives, carrying forth their dead: and what were all these but warnings given to you to prepare for the like trials?

Surely, then, it was your own security and regardlessness that made this affliction so surprizing to you; and who is to be blamed for that, you know.

Answer 2. There is much difference betwixt the sudden death of infants, and that of grown persons; the latter may have much work to do; many sins actually to repent of, and many evidences of their interest in Christ to examine and clear, in order to their more comfortable death; and so sudden death may be deprecated by them.

But the case of infants, who exercise not their reason, is far different; they have no such work to do, but are purely passive: All that is done in order to their salvation, is done by God immediately upon them; so it comes all to one, whether their death be more quick, or more slow.

Answer 3. You complain of the suddenness of the stroke: but another will be ready to say, had my friend died in that manner, my affliction had been nothing to what now it is; I have seen many deaths contrived into one; I saw the gradual approaches of it upon my dear relation, who felt every thread of death as it came on toward him, who often cried with Job, chap. iii. ver. 21, 22. " Where- " fore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in

" soul? Which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it " more than for hid treasures: Which rejoice exceedingly, and are " glad when they can find the grave."

That which you reckon the sting of your affliction, others would have reckoned a favour and privilege. How many tender parents, and other relations, who loved their friends as dearly as yourselves, have been forced to their knees, upon no other errand but this, to beg the Lord to hasten the separation, and put an end to that sorrow, which to them was much greater than the sorrow for the dead.

Plea 7. You press me to moderation of sorrows, and I know I ought to shew it; but you do not know how the case stands with me, there is a sting in this affliction, that none feels but myself; and, O! how intolerable is it now! I neglected proper means in season to preserve life, or miscarried in the use of means. I now see such a neglect, or such a mistake about the means, as I cannot but judge greatly to contribute to that sad loss which I now, too late, lament.

O my negligence, O my rashness, and inconsiderateness! how doth my conscience now smite me for my folly! and by this aggravate my burden beyond what is usually felt by others. Had I seasonably applied myself to the use of proper means, and kept strictly to such courses and counsels as those that are able and skilful might have prescribed, I might now have had a living husband, wife, or child: whereas I am now not only bereaved, but am apt to think I have bereaved myself of them. Surely there is no sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Answer 1. Though it be an evil to neglect, and slight the means ordained by God for recovery of health, yet it is no less evil to ascribe too much to them, or rely too much on them? the best means in the world are weak and ineffectual, without God's assistance and concurrence, and they never have that his assistance or concurrence, when his time is come; and that it was fully come in your friend's case, is manifested now by the event. So that if your friend had had the most excellent helps the world affords, they would have availed nothing. This consideration takes place only in your case, who see what the will of God is by the issue, and may not be pleaded by any whilst it remains dubious and uncertain, as it generally doth in time of sickness.

Answer 2. Do you not unjustly charge, and blame yourselves for that which is not really your fault, or neglect! How far you are chargeable in this case, will best appear by comparing the circumstances you are now in, with those you were in when your relation was only arrested by sickness; and it was dubious to you what was your duty, and best course to take.

Possibly you had observed so many to perish in physicians hands, and so many to recover without them, that you judged it safer for your friend to be without those means, than to be hazarded by them.

Or, if divers methods and courses were prescribed, and persuaded to, and you now see your error, in preferring that which was most improper, and neglecting what was more safe, and probable; yet as long as it did not so appear to your understanding at that time, but you followed the best light you had to guide you at that time, it were most unjust to charge the fault upon yourselves, for choosing that course that then seemed best to you, whether it were so in itself, or not.

To be angry with yourselves for doing, or omitting what was then done, or omitted, according to your best discretion, and judgment, because you now see it by the light of the event, far otherwise than you did before; it is to be troubled that you are but men, or that you are not as God, who only can foresee issues and events; and that you acted as all rational creatures are bound to do, according to the light they have, at the time and season of action.

Answer 3. To conclude, Times of great affliction are ordinarily times of great temptation, and it is usual with Satan then to charge us with more sins than we are guilty of, and also make those things to be sins, which, upon impartial examination, will not be found to be so.

Indeed, had your neglect or miscarriage been known or voluntary, or had you really preferred a little money (being able to give it) before the life of your relation, and did deliberately choose to hazard this, rather than part with that; no doubt, then, but there had been much evil of sin mixed with your affliction; and your conscience may justly smite you for it, as your sin; but in the other case, which is more common, and I presume yours; it is a false charge, and you ought not to abet the design of Satan in it.

Judge by the sorrow you now feel by your friend, in what degree he was dear to you, and what you could now willingly give to ransom his life, if it could be done with money. Judge, I say, by this, how groundless the charge is that Satan now draws up against you, and you are but too ready to yield to the truth of it.

Plea 8. But my troubles are upon a higher score, and account: my child or friend is passed into eternity, and I know not how it is with his soul; were I sure my relation were with Christ, I should be quiet; but my fears of the contrary are overwhelming; O it is terrible to think of the damnation of one so dear to me.

Answer 1. Admit what the objection supposes, that you have real grounds to fear the eternal condition of your dear relation; yet it is utterly unbeseeming you, even in such a case as this, to dispute with, or repine against the Lord.

I do confess it is a sore and heavy trial, and that there is no cause more sad, and sinking to the spirit of a gracious person: their death is but a trifle to this; but yet if you be such as fear the Lord, methinks his indisputable sovereignty over them, and his distinguishing love and mercy to you, should at least silence you in this matter.

First, His indisputable sovereignty over them, Rom. ix. 20. "Who art thou, O man, who disputest with God?" He speaks in the matters of eternal election and reprobation. What if the Lord will not be gracious to those that are so dear to us? Is there any wrong done to them or us thereby? Aaron's two sons were cut off in the act of sin, by the Lord's immediate hand, and yet he held his peace, Lev. x. 3. God told Abraham plainly, that the covenant should not be established with Ishmael, for whom he so earnestly prayed, *O let Ishmael live before thee!* and he knew that there was no salvation out of the covenant, and yet he sits down silent under the word of the Lord.

Secondly, But if this do not quiet you, yet methinks his distinguishing love and mercy to you should do it. O what do you owe to God, that root and branch hath not been cast together into the fire! that the Lord hath given you good hope, through grace that it shall be well with you for ever. Let this stop your mouth, and quiet your spirit, though you would have grounds for this fear.

Answer 2. But pray examine the grounds of your fear, whether it may not proceed from the strength of your affections to the eternal welfare of your friend, or from the subtilty of Satan, designing hereby to overwhelm and swallow you up in supposed, as well as from just grounds and causes? In two cases it is very probable your fear may proceed only from your own affection, or Satan's temptation.

First, If your relation died young, before it did any thing to destroy your hopes. Or,

Secondly, If grown, and in some good degree hopeful; only he did not in life, or at death, manifest, and give evidence of grace, with that clearness as you desired.

As to the case of infants in general, it is none of our concern to judge their condition; and as for those that sprang from covenanted parents it becomes us to exercise charity towards them; the scripture speaks very favourably of them.

And as for the more adult, who have escaped the pollutions of the world, and made conscience of sin and duty, albeit they never manifested what you could desire they had; yet in them, as in young Abijah, "may be found some good things toward the Lord," which you never took notice of. Reverence of your authority, bashfulness, and shame-facedness, reservedness of disposition, and many other things, may hide those small and weak beginnings of grace that are in children, from the observations of the parents. God might see that in them that you never saw; he despiseth not the day of small things.

However it be, it is now out of your reach; your concernment rather is to improve the affliction to your own good, than judge and determine their condition, which belongs not to you but to God.

Plea 9. O but I have sinned in this relation, and God hath punished my sin in dissolving it. O saith one, my heart was set too

much upon it, I even idolized it, that was my sin: and, saith another, I wanted due affections, and did not love my relation, at least not so spiritually as I ought; that was my sin. Now God is visiting me for all the neglects and defects that hath been in me towards my relation.

Answer 1. There is no man so thoroughly sanctified, as not to fail, and come short in many things pertaining to his relative duties: and to speak, as the thing is, the corruptions of the holiest persons are as much discovered in this, as any other thing whatsoever; and it is a very common thing for conscience, not only to charge these failures upon us, but to aggravate them to the utmost when God hath made the separation. So that this is no more than what is usual, and very common with persons in your case.

Answer 2. Admit that which the objection supposes, that God had afflicted you for your sin, and removed that comfort from you, which you idolized, and too much doted on; yet there is no reason you should be so cast down under your affliction: For all this may be, and probably is the fruit of his love to, and care of your soul, Rev. iii. 19. He tells the afflicted, for their comfort, "Whom I "love, I rebuke and chasten." How much better is it to have an idolized enjoyment taken from you, in mercy, than if God should say concerning you, as he did of Ephraim, Hos. iv. 17. "He is "joined to idols, let him alone."

O it is better for you that your Father now reckons with you for your follies with the rod in his hand, than to say as he doth to some, let them go on, I will not hinder them in, or rebuke them for their sinful courses; but will reckon with them for all together in hell at last.

Answer 3. And as to what you now charge upon yourself, that the neglect of duty did spring from the want of love to your relation; your sorrow at parting may evidence that your relation was rooted deep in your affection; but if your love was not so spiritual and pure, to love and enjoy them in God; that was undoubtedly your sin, and is the sin of most Christians, for which both you, and all others, ought to be humbled.

Plea 10. God hath blessed me with an estate, and outward comforts in the world, which I reckoned to have left to my posterity; and now I have none to leave it with, nor have I any comfort to think of it; the purposes of my heart are broken off, and the comfort of all my other enjoyments blasted by this stroke in an hour. How are the pains and cares of many years perished.

Answer 1. How many are there in the world, yea, of our own acquaintance, whom God hath either denied, or deprived both of the comforts of children and estates too? If he have left you those outward comforts, you ought to acknowledge his goodness therein, and not to slight these because he hath deprived you of the other.

Answer 2. Though your children are gone, yet God hath many

children left in the world, whose bowels you may refresh with what he hath bestowed upon you; and your charity to them will doubtless turn to a more considerable account, than if you had left a large estate to your own posterity.

Surely we are not sent into this world to heap up great estates for our children: and if you have been too eager in this design, you may now read God's just rebuke of your folly. Bless God you have yet an opportunity, to serve him eminently by your charity, and God deny you other executors, let your own hands be your executors, to distribute to the necessity of the saints, that the blessings of them that are ready to perish may come upon you.

Plea 11. O but the remembrance of its witty words and pretty actions, is wounding.

Answer 1. Let it rather lift up your hearts to God in praise that gave you so desirable a child, than fill your heart with discontent at his hand in removing it. How many parents are there in the world whose children God hath deprived of reason and understanding, so that they only differ from the beasts in external shape and figure? And how many shew betimes so perverse a temper, that little comfort can be expected from them.

Answer 2. These are but small circumstances, and trivial things in themselves; but by these little things Satan manages a great design against your soul, to deject or exasperate it: And surely this is not your business at this time; you have greater things than the words and actions of children to mind; to search out God's ends in the affliction, to mortify the corruption it is sent to rebuke, to quiet your hearts in the will of God; this is your work.

Plea 12. *Lastly*, It is objected, O but God hides his face from me in my affliction; it is dark within, as well as without, and this makes my case more deplorable, greatly afflicted, and sadly deserted.

Answer 1. Though you want at present sensible comfort, yet you have reason to be thankful for gracious supports. Though the light of God's countenance shine not upon you, yet you find the everlasting arms are underneath you; the care of God worketh for you, when the consolations of God are withdrawn from you.

Answer 2. To have God hide his face in the time of trouble, is no new or unusual thing; God's dearest saints, yea, his own Son, hath experienced it, who in the deeps of inward and outward trouble, when wave called unto wave, felt not those sweet, sensible influences of comfort from God, which had always filled his soul formerly. If Christ cry in extremity, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken "me!" Then sure we need not wonder, as if some strange thing had happened to us.

Answer 3. May not your submissive carriage under the rod provoke God to hide his face from you. Pray consider it well, nothing is more probable than for this to be the cause of God's withdrawment from you. Could you, in meekness and quietness, receive that cup

your Father hath given you to drink; accept the punishment of your iniquities; say, Good is the word of the Lord, It is the Lord, let him do what he will: You would soon find the case altered with you; but the comforting spirit finds no delight, or rest, in a turbulent and tumultuous breast.

And thus I have satisfied the most considerable pleas urged, in justification of our excesses.

4. I come now to the last thing proposed, namely, the means of curing and preventing these sinful excesses of sorrow for the death of our dear relations.

And, although much hath been said already to dissuade from this evil, and I have enlarged already much beyond my first intention; yet I shall cast in some farther help and assistance towards the healing of this distemper, by prescribing the following rules:

Rule 1. *If you would not mourn excessively for the loss of creature-comforts, then beware that you set not your delight and love excessively, or inordinately upon them, whilst you do enjoy them.*

Strong affections make strong afflictions; the higher the tide the lower the ebb. According to the measure of our delight in the enjoyment, is our grief in the loss of these things. The apostle knits these two graces, temperance and patience, together in the precept, 2 Pet. i. 16. and it is very observable how intemperance and impatience are inseparably linked in experience, yea, the experience of the best men. You read, Gen. xxxvii. 3. "Now Israel loved "Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his "old age; and made him a coat of many colours."

This was the darling; Jacob's heart was so exceedingly set upon him, his very life was bound up in the life of the lad. Now when the supposed death of the child was brought to him, how did he carry it? See ver. 34, 35. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sack-"cloth upon his loins; and mourned for his son many days: And "all his sons, and all his daughters, rose up to comfort him, but he "refused to be comforted. And he said, for I will go down into the "grave to my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

Here, as in a glass, are the effects of excessive love to a child represented: Here you may see what work immoderate love will make, even in a sanctified heart.

O therefore let your moderation be known to all men, in your delight and sorrows about earthly things; for ordinarily the proportion of the one is answerable to the other.

Rule 2. *If you would not be overwhelmed with grief for the loss of your relations, be exact and careful in discharging your duties to them while you have them.*

The testimony of your conscience, that you have laboured in all things to discharge the duties you owed to your relations whilst they were with you, will prove an excellent allay to your sorrows for them when they are no longer yours. It is not so much the single

affliction, as the guilt charged upon us in times of affliction, that makes our load so heavy.

O what a terrible thing is it to look upon our dead friends, whilst conscience is accusing and upbraiding us for our duties neglected, and such or such sins committed? O you little think how dreadful a spectacle this will make the dead body of thy friend to thee!

Conscience, if not quite stupid or dead, will speak at such a time. O therefore, as ever you would provide for a comfortable parting at death, or meet again at judgment; be exact, punctual, and circumspect, in all your relative duties.

Rule 3. *If you would not be overwhelmed by trouble, for the loss of dear relations, then turn to God under your trouble, and pour out your sorrows, by prayer, into his bosom.*

This will ease and allay your troubles. Blessed be God for the ordinance of prayer; how much are all the saints beholden to it, at all times, but especially in heart-sinking and distressful times? It is some relief, when in distress, we can pour out our trouble into the bosom of a wife, or faithful friend; how much more when we leave our complaint before the gracious, wise, and faithful God? I told you before of that holy man, who having lost his dear and only son, got to his closet, there poured out his soul freely to the Lord, and when he came down to his friends that were waiting below to comfort him, and fearing how he would bear that stroke, he came from his duty with a cheerful countenance, telling them he would be content to bury a son, if it were possible every day, provided he might enjoy such comfort as his soul had found in that private hour.

Go thy way, Christian, to thy God, get thee to thy knees in the cloudy and dark day; retire from all creatures, that thou mayest have thy full liberty with thy God, and there pour out thy heart before him, in free, full, and broken-hearted confessions of sin: Judge thyself worthy of hell, as well as of this trouble; justify God in all his smartest strokes; beg him, in this distress, to put under the everlasting arms; intreat one smile, one gracious look, to enlighten thy darkness, and cheer thy drooping spirit. Say with the prophet, Jer. xvii. 17. "Be thou not a terror to me; thou art my hope in the day "of evil." And try what relief such a course will afford thee. Surely, if thy heart be sincere in this course, thou shalt be able to say with that holy man, Psalm xciv. 29. "In the multitude of my thoughts "which I had within me, thy comforts have delighted my soul."

Rule 4. *If you would bear the loss of your dear relations with moderation, eye God in the whole process of the affliction more, and secondary causes and circumstances of the matter less.*

"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it," Psalm xxxix. 9. Consider the hand of the Lord in the whole matter: And that,

First, As a sovereign hand, which hath right to dispose of thee, and all thy comforts, without thy leave or consent, Job xxiii. 13.

Secondly, As a father's hand correcting thee in love and faithfulness. Prov. iii. 11. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, as a "father the son in whom he delighteth." O if once you could but see affliction as a rod in a father's hand, proceeding from his love, and intended for your eternal good; how quiet would you then be?

And surely if it draws your heart nearer to God, and mortifies it more to this vain world, it is a rod in the hand of special love: If it end in your love to God, doubt not but it comes from God's love to you.

Thirdly, As a just and righteous hand. Hast not thou procured this to thyself by thy own folly? Yea, the Lord is just in all that is come upon thee; whatever he hath done, yet he hath done thee no wrong.

Fourthly, Lastly, as a moderate and merciful hand that hath punished thee less than thine iniquities deserve: He that hath cast thee into affliction, might justly have cast thee into hell. It is of the Lord's mercy that thou art not consumed. Why doth the living man complain?

Rule 5. *If you will bear your affliction with moderation, compare it with the afflictions of other men, and that will greatly quiet your spirits.*

You have no cause to say God hath dealt bitterly with you, and that there is no sorrow like your sorrow: Look round about you, and impartially consider the condition that others are in; and they nothing inferior to you in any respect. You had one dear child; Aaron had two at a stroke, Job all at one stroke; and both these by an immediate stroke from the hand of God. Some godly parents have lived to see their children die in their sin by the hand of justice, others have seen them live to the dishonour of God, and breaking of their own spirits, and would have esteemed it a mercy if they had died from the womb, and given up the ghost when they came out of the belly, as Job speaks.

In what misery have some parents seen their children die! God holding them as so many terrible spectacles of misery before their eyes; so that they begged the Lord, with importunity, to let loose his hands, and cut them off; death being in their esteem, nothing to those continual agonies in which they have seen them lie weltering from day to day. O you little know what a bitter cup others have given them to drink? Surely, if you compare, you must say, the Lord hath dealt gently and graciously with me.

Rule 6. *Carefully shun and avoid whatsoever may renew your sorrow, or provoke you to impatience.*

Increase not your sorrow by the sight of, or discourses about sad objects; and labour to avoid them, as occasions presented by the enemy of your souls, to draw forth the corruptions of your heart.

I told you before why Jacob would not have the child of which Rachel died, called after the name his wife had given, Benoni, the son of my sorrow; lest it should prove a daily occasion of renewing

his trouble for the loss of his dear wife; but he called his name Benjamin.

Your impatience is like tinder, or gunpowder, so long as you can prevent the sparks from falling on it, there is no great danger; but you that carry such dangerous prepared matter in your own hearts, cannot be too careful to prevent them. Do by murmuring, as you do by blasphemous thoughts; think quite another way, and give no occasion.

Rule 7. *In the day of your murmuring for the death of your friends, seriously consider your own death as approaching, and that you and your dead friend are distinguished by a small interval and point of time.* 2 Sam. xi. 13. *I shall go to him.* Surely the thoughts of your own death, as approaching also, will greatly allay your sorrows for the dead that are gone before you.

We are apt to fancy a long life in the world, and then the loss of those comforts which we promised ourselves so much of the sweetness and comforts of our lives from, seems an intolerable thing.

But would you realize your own deaths more, you would not be so deeply concerned for their deaths as you are. Could you but look into your own graves more seriously, you would be able to look into your friend's grave more composedly.

And thus I have finished what I designed from this scripture. The Father of mercies, and God of all comforts, whose sole prerogative it is to comfort them that are cast down, write all his truths upon your hearts, that they may abide there, and reduce your disordered affections to that frame which best suits the will of God, and the profession you make of subjection and resignation thereunto.

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